Commentary
November 2000

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Books in Review
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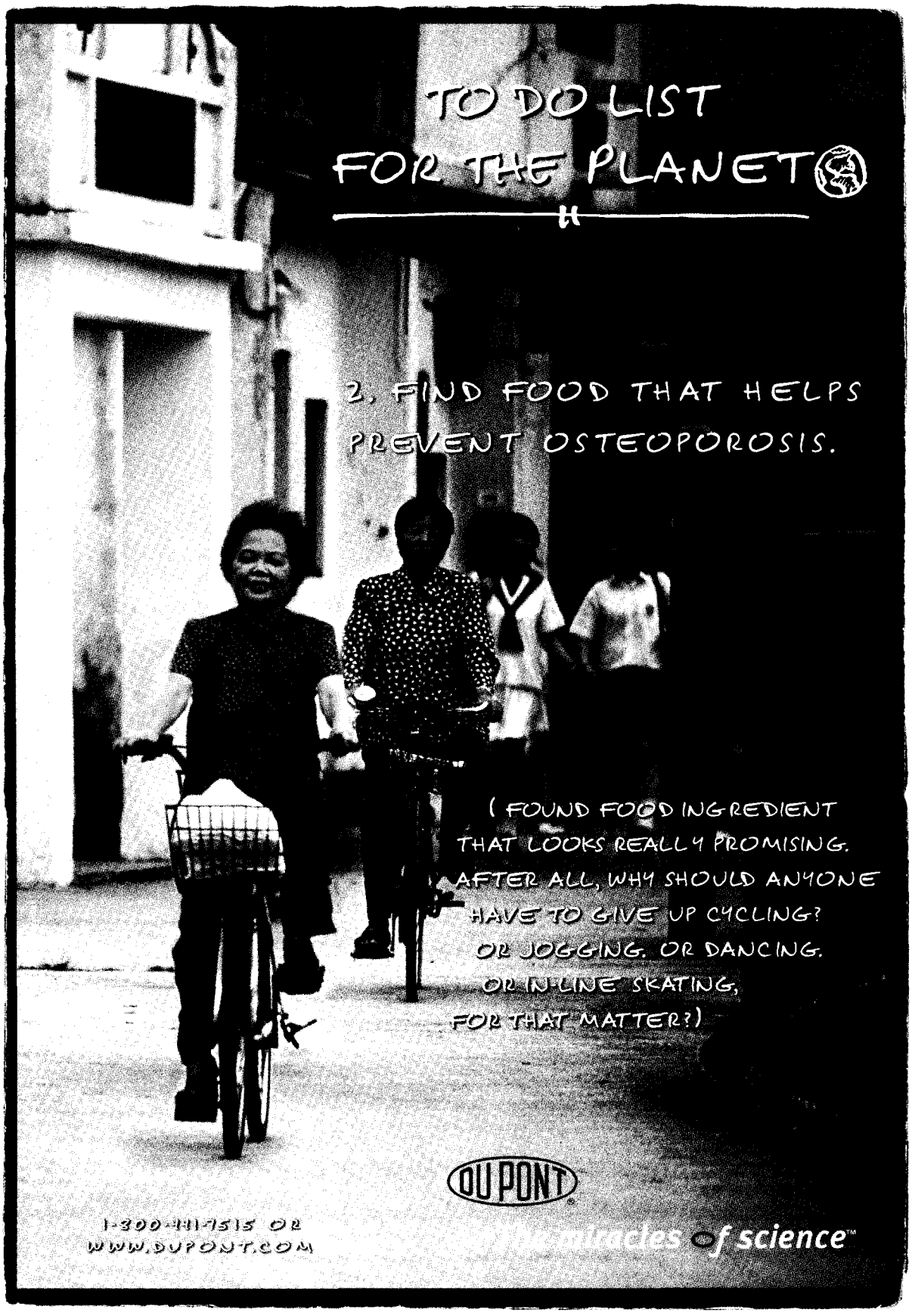
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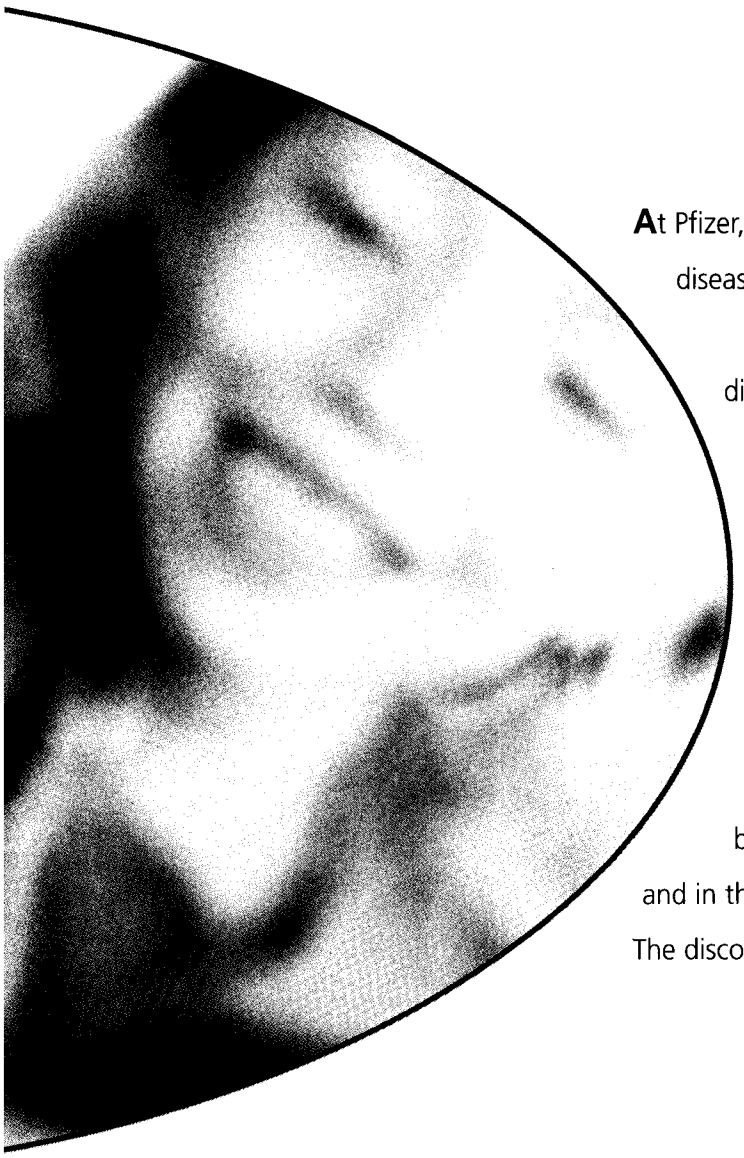

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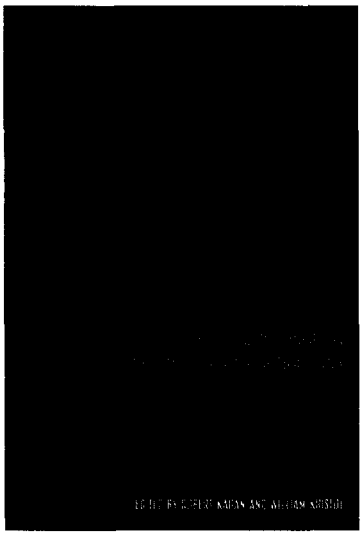

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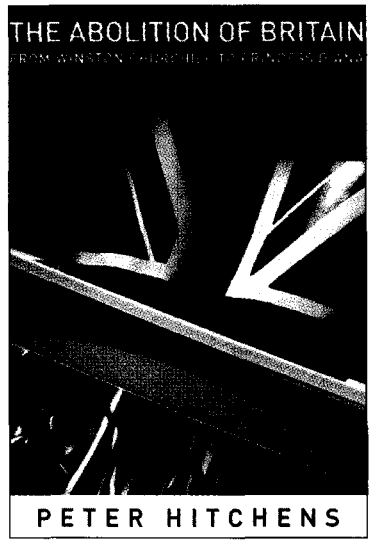
By Peter Hitchens



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Commentary
November 2000

Letters from Readers

Zionism

To the Editor:

As someone who has admired the work of Hillel Halkin, I was somewhat confused and disappointed by his negative review of Yoram Hazony's *The Jewish State* [Books in Review, July-August]. This objectively written book of 340 pages, with an additional 70 pages of notes, can hardly be perceived as partisan, as Mr. Halkin suggests. Had I read only Mr. Halkin's review, I would not have read the book itself. As I can testify, however, that would have been a great loss.

Lewis B. Dashe
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

To the Editor:

Hillel Halkin is correct to question the account of anti-Zionism's intellectual origins offered by Yoram Hazony in *The Jewish State*. But his more fundamental disagreement with Hazony concerns whether ideas in general can explain Israel's loss of morale. Mr. Halkin suggests that the weariness and bitterness of Israelis have instead resulted from, among other things, "PLO terror, the Yom Kippur war of 1973, the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, [and] the *intifada*."

I would argue, however, that it is not the battles themselves that have caused Israel's demoralization but rather the faulty idea that has governed Israeli warfare—"love thy enemy." Toward the end of each of its armed conflicts, Israel has forgone trouncing its adversary in order to beg for peace. Similarly, in the peace process, the reality of Israel's security needs and of Arab noncompliance has been deemed insignificant as compared with "the legitimate rights of the Palestinians."

If instead of viewing the Arab cause as just, Israel recognized the aggression and hostility of its neighbors, its victories might serve to energize the people. It is indeed in the war of ideas that Zionism and Israel have been defeated.

Allen Weingarten
Morristown, New Jersey

To the Editor:

Though Hillel Halkin does not mention it in his review of Yoram Hazony's book, he has suggested elsewhere that concern about "post-Zionism" is an expression of the American Jewish establishment's guilt over abandoning the key element of Zionism: *aliyah*, or Jewish immigration to Israel. Indeed, the lack of a steady influx of Jews from the West may become a serious threat to Israel's existence. Immigrants from the former Soviet Union have for now tipped the scales in Israel's favor, and its Arab neighbors now view the country less as an imperialist outpost and more as a critical mass of Jews. (It is no coincidence that Arab readiness to negotiate peace has increased during the last decade.) But the demographic situation is still touch and go, which would not be the case if a half-million American Jews had undertaken *aliyah*.

David Chinitz
Jerusalem, Israel

To the Editor:

Hillel Halkin correctly notes the "badly skewed" presentation in Yoram Hazony's compelling but eccentric book. But even Mr. Halkin's list of Hazony's omissions is incomplete.

I could not find a single reference in the book to the group that now makes up more than half of Israel's population—the Sephardim—or to any individual Sephardi Israeli. In this respect, Hazony practices the same cultural triumphalism and paternalism that have been a far more important factor in alienating large sections of the population from the Zionist establishment than the elegant, peripheral musings of a tiny group of academics at Hebrew University.

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Another of Hazony's striking omissions is any discussion of the war in Lebanon, which broke every rule of trust between the Israeli people and their leadership and which has been a much greater source of civic, military, and political cynicism than the "Lavon affair," to which he devotes sixteen pages.

Hazony also glosses over the issue of religion. The only rabbis whom he mentions are representative of the American Reform movement (Judah Magnes, Steven Wise, and a few others) who were allied with Martin Buber's unrequited binationalist dreams. This is surprising, since the greatest and most insidious Jewish campaign against the legitimacy of the state of Israel and Zionism has been waged by intensely Orthodox Jews—the *haredim*—who see themselves as continuing the 19th-century battle against the secularizing of Jewish life.

It is significant that those who present themselves as the most authentic bearers of Jewish tradition—and are recognized as such by the state of Israel—refuse to sing *Hatikvah* (the Israeli national anthem), ignore the official moment of silence on the memorial day for Israel's fallen soldiers, and allow the Israeli flag to be burned in their neighborhoods.

I agree entirely with Yoram Hazony that the manifestations of post-Zionism in Israeli society constitute "a cause to weep for generations." It is straining credibility, however, to suggest that Martin Buber and his coterie are somehow responsible.

PAUL SHAVIV
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

HILLEL HALKIN writes:

Lewis B. Dashe is mistaken if he thinks I faulted Yoram Hazony for being "partisan." Indeed one of my criticisms of *The Jewish State* was that it was not partisan enough, and sacrificed opportunities for concrete analysis by seeking to remain above Israel's political frays. Had Mr. Hazony taken the plunge into these, he would have written, in my opinion, a more interesting and less abstract book.

I could not agree more with Allen Weingarten about the all-too-Israeli—alas, the all-too-Jewish—propensity for "loving," or at least justifying, one's enemies. (Understanding one's enemies, of course, is something else and generally a very good idea.) And when one's enemies do not reciprocate, the tendency is to blame oneself, or better yet, one's fellow countrymen, and direct one's frustration at them. This syndrome certainly helps to explain the psychology of much of the Israeli Left. Yet, writing from New Jersey, Mr. Weingarten perhaps fails to appreciate how tired any people can be made by 80 years of violent conflict. Although refusing to turn the other cheek has much to recommend it, it is not a cure-all for combat fatigue.

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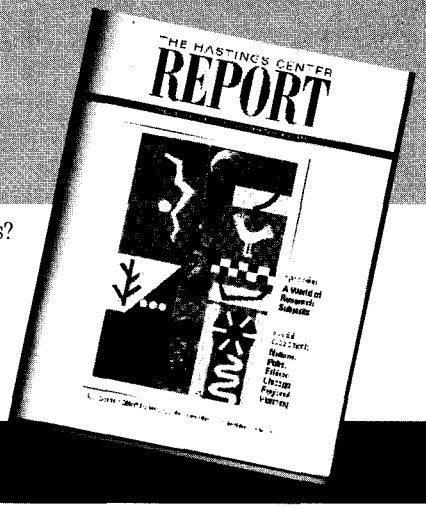

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Hence the importance of David Chinitz's point. Were Israelis to believe, as once they did, that they were being asked to stand firm on behalf of the entire Jewish people and its history, this might be even more "energizing," to use Mr. Weingarten's word, than the exhausting task of staying angry with their enemies. But for them to believe this, annual checks and rhetorical pats on the back from the Diaspora (both in any case on the wane) are not sufficient. If Israel is the Jewish state, Jews should want to come to live in it, and post-Zionism is not a totally illogical reaction to the fact that so few do.

Paul Shaviv is wrong: Yoram Hazony does write about a number of partly or wholly Sephardi figures, including David Yellin, A.B. Yehoshua, and Meron Benvenisti, and I confess to seeing no "cultural paternalism" in his book, which deals with intellectual rather than social history. And while I agree that the behavior of Israel's *haredim* is often scandalous, they are at least living in Israel. They may yet turn out to be a more constructive presence there than they now seem.

Black Muslims

TO THE EDITOR:

In "How Elijah Muhammad Won" [June], Daniel Pipes intelligently explores an important issue—the growing nexus between African-Americans and Islam. One can cavil about a few points. Marcus Garvey's black nationalist organization was called the Universal (not United) Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). More substantively, Mr. Pipes's assertion that Elijah Muhammad's son, W. Deen Mohammed, has adopted more "radical" political views in recent years is open to question. Mohammed steered clear, for instance, of a special session at this year's Nation of Islam (NOI) "Saviors' Day" featuring a televised appearance by Libya's Qaddafi. And there is still no smoking gun showing that Louis Farrakhan "supervised" the NOI thugs who assassinated Malcolm X.

My main concern, however, is the adequacy of Mr. Pipes's sociological answer to the question of "How Elijah Muhammad Won." He stresses the appeal of Islam's moralistic and patriarchal social teachings to black males in search of father figures. But this explanation, though part of the truth, does not really tell us why African-Americans have been tempted for a very long time to leave behind Christianity (a religion certainly not without father figures) for Islam. Why should there be mass conversions by African-Americans to Islam rather than, say, to the Jehovah's Witnesses, whose apocalyptic vision also influenced the NOI's founding generation?

Some African-American historians are currently trying to prove that there were pious, African-born "black Muslims" on virtually every slave plantation. This is fantasy, but the theological affinity between Islam and African-American historical experience is not. Islam's remarkable plasticity has encouraged many aggrieved ethnic groups to make heterodox claims to prophetic status akin to those made by Elijah Muhammad. The Indian-Muslim Ahmadiyyah movement, for instance, carried a belief in its leader's status as the "divine messenger" from the subcontinent to U.S. cities at precisely the same time the NOI was taking shape.

African-Americans may also have been drawn to Islam because of the strong Old Testament orientation of their Christianity. While overtly identifying with the children of Abraham who were delivered from Egyptian bondage, they covertly sympathized with the Bible's dispossessed. In particular, Afrocentrists believe that

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the Egyptians and Ethiopians are Ham's African offspring.

HAROLD BRACKMAN
San Diego, California

TO THE EDITOR:

The question is not only "How Elijah Muhammad Won" but how Islam itself has done so well among Africans. Notwithstanding the statement by the Baptist mother of an American convert quoted in Daniel Pipes's article, Islam did not "come out of Africa" but out of Southwest Asia. Within a century of Muhammad's death, his sword-wielding Arab disciples were actively stealing black Africans away from their own religions and traditions. Descendants of these Arabs appeared later on the continent to enslave black Africans. Indeed, American slavery could not have existed without the wholesale raids of Muslim intermediaries into the African interior.

STEPHEN A. BERGER
Tel Aviv, Israel

DANIEL PIPES writes:

Harold Brackman is right about the full name of UNIA, but wrong about W. Deen Mohammed. To give just one illustration of Mohammed's continued radicalization: his organization, the Muslim American Society, joined with a host of Islamist institutions in May 1999 to cosponsor American Muslims for Jerusalem (AMJ), a group that promotes the theory of a Jewish conspiracy controlling the United States. At one AMJ fundraising dinner in November 1999, according to a participant, the evening was full of "battle cries and a declaration of war on American Jews."

As for Louis Farrakhan's role in the murder of Malcolm X: the circumstantial evidence may not sway a court of law, but it is certainly enough to convince most observers, including Malcolm X's own immediate family.

The appeal of Islam to African-Americans is a complex subject that I only touched on in my article; Mr. Brackman's points are reasonable and complement my own.

Stephen A. Berger points to the enduring irony that substantial numbers of blacks were enslaved by Muslims when the trans-Atlantic slave trade was flourishing. Perhaps yet sadder is the fact that many black Muslims in the United States refuse to see the tragedy of enslavement that is unfolding even today in Mauritania and Sudan. Some of their leaders (notably Louis Farrakhan) have gone so far as to deny its existence. ("Where is the proof?," Farrakhan asks, intimating that the very suggestion is part of a "Zionist conspiracy.") To make matters worse, these leaders stand in close solidarity with the same governments that enslave black Africans.

Novels

TO THE EDITOR:

I agree with much of Norman Podhoretz's "Bellow at 85, Roth at 67" [July-August]. I too think *American Pastoral* is Roth's best novel, although I do not share Mr. Podhoretz's ideological strictures on the two more recent ones, *I Married a Communist* and *The Human Stain*. In particular, his notion that there is a "plague of political correctness in the universities" strikes me as hyperbolic. Despite the incident that is used to set *The Human Stain* in motion, Roth himself knows better, as is suggested by the actual experience on which he drew for it.

Nearly twenty years ago, a professor at Princeton, an old friend of Roth's who has since died, was teaching a summer course for New Jersey public-school teachers. Two individuals on the class list having never responded when he called the roll, he looked up and asked, "Are these spooks or actual people?" He was promptly accused of "racism" by another student in the class. (Needless to say, he had mo-

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mentarily forgotten that "spooks" was sometimes used as an epithet for blacks.) This event had no further consequences and was viewed with amusement by the professor himself, who evidently told Roth about it.

In a proper exercise of the novelistic imagination, Roth transposes the incident to the present at a small liberal-arts college in rural New England and has the professor who made the remark denounced as a racist and fired despite having tenure. Roth clearly knew that this did not happen at Princeton and would be unlikely to happen at any major university today or two decades ago. As for whether it could happen at a small college, I am reminded of David Riesman's conception of an "academic tail" in which lesser institutions after an interval of several years embrace what has ceased to be fashionable at the leading institutions, though I would suppose that in recent years improved communications had at least speeded up this process. I doubt that either Mr. Podhoretz or I can assess accurately the ultimate credibility of Roth's fictional account.

DENNIS WRONG
Princeton, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

Perhaps Norman Podhoretz is right that L.C. Knights's essay "How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?" was "once notorious," but only because those who referred to it had often not read it. In any case, Mr. Podhoretz's summary is confused. The "silly question" of the title, which he attributes to Knights, was actually a paraphrase of A.C. Bradley's truly notorious notes in *Shakespearean Tragedy*. The whole point of Knights's essay was to undermine Bradley's approach to Shakespeare and to help establish the proper field of criticism as a disciplined response to the words on the page rather than unhelpful speculations about anything that pops into the critic's head.

Incidentally, the title of the essay was suggested to Knights by the English critic F.R. Leavis.

BRIAN BARBOUR
Providence, Rhode Island

TO THE EDITOR:

In "Bellow at 85, Roth at 67," Norman Podhoretz quotes from *The Adventures of Augie March*: "He had rich blood. His father peddled apples." If this remark appears in *Augie* (I do not remember it there), Bellow repeated it in his later novel *Herzog*. The title character has been reviewing a lengthy and overly pessimistic monograph on human destiny by an old student acquaintance named Shapiro. In an imaginary letter to this Shapiro, Herzog says: "But we mustn't forget how quickly the visions of genius become the canned goods of the intellectuals. . . . I can't accept this foolish dreariness. . . . You are too intelligent for this. You inherited rich blood. Your father peddled apples."

ROBERT FRENKEL
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

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NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

Both Brian Barbour and Robert Frenkel have caught me in error. In both cases, these errors resulted from trusting to a memory no longer as reliable as it once was instead of checking it by looking things up.

I am especially mortified to have done a gross intellectual injustice to L.C. Knights. Like Knights, whose "How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?" I read nearly 50 years ago (and should have reread before referring to it now), I was a student of F.R. Leavis myself. I should therefore have realized that in posing what I correctly called the "silly question" he used as his title, he was following Leavis in making fun of the A.C. Bradley school of Shakespeare criticism, which treated the plays mainly in terms of character, and that his purpose was to replace it with a conception of them as "dramatic poems." Mr. Barbour is right: the notoriety to which I referred should have been assigned to Bradley, not to Knights.

As for the quote from Saul Bellow, Mr. Frenkel produces the goods. Obviously he is correct in saying that it comes from *Herzog*, and though I have not skimmed through *The Adventures of Augie March* to see whether the same image appears there, I very much doubt that Bellow, having used it once, would have repeated it. Again my memory played me false, and again I apologize.

Dennis Wrong's letter adds a very interesting historical footnote to *The Human Stain*, but he has not convinced me that speaking of a plague of political correctness in the universities is "hyperbolic." So where his letter is concerned, I see no reason to apologize, though I do wish to express my gratification at the fact that he agrees with much of what I say in the essay.

Schlock Art

TO THE EDITOR:

Steven C. Munson is mistaken to dismiss the art of Norman Rockwell ["Selling Norman Rockwell," September]. Consider four of the pictures in the current Rockwell exhibit: granny and grandson saying grace at a greasy spoon in the middle of a steam-age industrial city; the extended family at Thanksgiving dinner; the rancher waiting with his eager son for the bus to spirit the boy away to college and out of his father's life; Huckleberry Finn and the dead cat in the cemetery.

I cannot believe Mr. Munson missed what there is to see in these pictures. The first is a prime example of Rockwell's ability to create Vermeer-like qualities of light and multiple depths. Look out through the diner windows and register the industrial landscape, the rust-belt details where the grandparents of today's generation spent

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their lives. Rockwell has given the viewer two universes in one, with a magic reminiscent of Vermeer's *Woman with a Pitcher* with its clarity and complex internal references of light and shadow.

As for the other three pictures, they capture the side of Rockwell that has been most difficult for legions of urban and suburban observers to appreciate, largely because of their ignorance. The detailed replication of the hands, the wrinkled necks and faces—these are authentic beyond dispute, and so is their message of wear, toil, and triumph. As for the weeds and gnats and sunlight surrounding Huck in the graveyard, they describe a particular rural world of sense and sensation.

This is the way the old America was. It is how we who lived in it perceived it and felt about it. It has much to do with what motivated us to live as we did. If the ability to communicate a subject of such emotional depth and complexity is not high art, what is?

COLIN ESLER
Alberton, Montana

TO THE EDITOR:

Steven C. Munson's review of the Norman Rockwell exhibit was perhaps too highly intellectual. Yes, Rockwell's contrived paintings are schlock. The figures look like waxen representations of the cheerful dead. But the pictures are from an era when people were desperately trying to forget the reality of a great depression and two gruesome world wars. This type of bland and sometimes sanctimonious art may appear hideous now, but in saying that when viewing it "one does not know whether to laugh or cry," Mr. Munson suggests that deep down he does understand its appeal.

ASHER NAMENSON
Washington, D.C.

STEVEN C. MUNSON writes:

As Colin Esler's last paragraph makes clear, Rockwell's gift was for provoking nostalgia. And this alone should cause Mr. Esler to think twice about his insistence that Rockwell belongs in the same league with Vermeer. Seeing Vermeer's paintings is as close to an experience of complete timelessness and pure beauty as one is likely to get; to look at them is to be transported, not to another time and place, but to an entirely different realm of the spirit.

Asher Namenson is right that I do understand Rockwell's appeal, but that appeal has nothing to do with anything "deep down"; rather, it is entirely superficial, just like the appeal of the Hollywood movies of the same era that were similarly produced with the idea of lifting peoples' spirits and helping them forget their troubles. I would add only that I prefer those movies, which did not pretend to be anything greater than what they were.

Korea

TO THE EDITOR:

Robert Elegant's review of Stanley Weintraub's *MacArthur's War* [June] and, apparently, the book itself preserve the tradition of "leaving war to the generals" and show an ignorance of basic military facts. In the first place, Mr. Elegant propagates the myth that the Inchon landing was a brilliant stroke by MacArthur. But since the U.S. military knew that the entire North Korean army was more than 150 miles away at Pusan (where it was outnumbered by UN troops), the Inchon landing was an obvious move, despite the unfavorable tides.

Mr. Elegant's bigger failure lies in not reporting that at Christmastime in 1950 the Chinese were winning because UN forces were being led incompetently, a problem that our military leadership in Japan and the Pentagon failed to grasp. It was only when General Walton Walker was killed in an accident and replaced by General Matthew Ridgway that the UN went from uncontrolled retreat to effective offense, and achieved a radical reduction in the rate of casualties—all in the course of seven weeks. Within months the Chinese army, and several replacement armies, were defeated.

General Ridgway did not bring to bear any new strategy or forces or equipment to produce this dramatic reversal. Rather, he turned defeat into victory simply through competence, by insisting that his officers do what they had been taught and what was written in their manuals: occupy high ground, prepare a defense perimeter at night, maintain contact with adjacent units, keep to the attack schedule, provide hot food to the troops, report truthfully. It was not brilliant, but it was enough.

Virtually nobody noticed. Reams of paper and gallons of ink have been given over to developing geopolitical theories about the military turnabout in Korea, but the fundamental cause of victory, a change in leadership, has been ignored.

MAX SINGER
Jerusalem, Israel

ROBERT ELEGANT writes:

I am bemused that Max Singer has lit upon my review to unleash a pack of military truisms that are not often noted because they are so obvious. Nonetheless, his conclusions are awry.

If I am "ignorant of basic military facts," it is not for want of trying. As I mentioned in my review, I covered several wars, from Korea to Vietnam, for both the Overseas News Agency and the International News Service. I wonder if Mr. Singer's knowledge is based upon equal experience of combat.

In any case, he accuses me of preserving the tradition of "leaving war to the generals," but then goes on to declare that leaving the war to General Matthew Ridgway—whom, incidentally, I also admire—produced victory.

In reality, the counteroffensive led by Ridgway did not succeed in regaining the 38th parallel until some four months after he took control from General Walker. In the interim, Seoul fell again to the Communists. That delay is completely understandable, but it does not support Mr. Singer's assertion of Ridgway's virtually miraculous accomplishments.

Finally, I still think that Inchon was a brilliant stroke by MacArthur—if only because the entire U.S. military leadership opposed it, and was only persuaded to allow MacArthur to take the risk because of his unique prestige.

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Commentary
November 2000

The Struggle for Mastery in Asia

Aaron L. Friedberg

Over the course of the next several decades there is a good chance that the United States will find itself engaged in an open and intense geopolitical rivalry with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Such an outcome is not inevitable; few things in international politics are. But there are strong reasons to believe that it is at the very least plausible, and even quite likely. Indeed, there are reasons to believe it is already under way.

In what follows, my aim is to consider what such a Sino-American rivalry might look like, and how it could unfold. In doing so, I make three basic assumptions. The first is that, as a nation-state, China will continue to hang together—that, however dramatically its economy and political system may change over the next several decades, they will not collapse. My second assumption is that, in the words of a recent U.S. Defense Department report, China "wants to become the preeminent Asian power," which necessarily means that it will seek ultimately to displace the United States as the preponderant power in the region. Third, I assume that the United States, while seeking to satisfy China's ambitions by at least to some degree acceding to its wishes, will not be willing to abandon its own present position of preponderance in Asia or to surrender pride of place to China. To permit a potentially hostile power to dominate East Asia would not only be out of line with current U.S. policy, it would also mark a deviation from the fundamental pattern of American grand strategy since at least the latter part of the 19th century.

The combination of growing Chinese power, China's effort to expand its influence, and the unwillingness of the United States entirely to give way before it are the necessary preconditions of a "struggle for mastery" in Asia (to adopt a phrase from the British historian A.J.P. Taylor). How, then, might that struggle arise?

The Sino-American relationship today contains a mix of cooperative and competitive elements. The two countries trade with each other, American businesses invest considerable sums in China, and many Chinese students come to study in the United States. Beijing and Washington engage in sporadic military-to-military dialogues and ongoing discussions of various regional and global issues, including the future of the Korean peninsula and the proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, however, the U.S. and China have strong disagreements on a variety of matters, human rights and the Taiwan question being foremost among them. And in recent years the two sides have begun to regard each other as potential military rivals, although both are reluctant to acknowledge this openly.

It is precisely this mix of cooperative and com-

Aaron L. Friedberg, *professor of politics and director of the research program in international security at Princeton, is the author of, most recently,* In the Shadow of the Garrison State.

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petitive elements that may shift sharply in the competitive direction. In the new configuration of things, China and the United States would most likely continue some form of economic relationship, they would not be openly at war with one another, and they would maintain diplomatic ties. But flows of trade and investment would increasingly be distorted by strategic considerations, the two powers would be engaged in a much more open military competition—designing, deploying, and training their forces with an eye toward possible conflict—and this military rivalry would be accompanied by a political contest waged throughout the Asia-Pacific region and perhaps beyond.

Any number of pathways could lead from the present to this imagined future. Thus, a single catalytic event, such as a showdown over Taiwan, especially if it entailed a significant loss of life on either side, could transform the U.S.-China relationship virtually overnight. Whichever side prevailed, the loser would look for ways to exact revenge, and each power would likely redouble its efforts to strengthen its military and diplomatic postures in Asia and undermine those of its rival. Or there could be a gradual deterioration in relations, an accumulation of lesser disputes and failed efforts to resolve them that would lead the United States and China to become increasingly suspicious and hostile. Or there might be some combination of these trends—say, a period of gradual deterioration punctuated by one or a series of crises (like the one that followed the accidental American bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia in the spring of 1999), no one of which might seem in itself to be of overwhelming importance but which, taken together, could culminate in a much more contentious relationship.

Regardless of how it arose, an intensified Sino-American rivalry would likely manifest itself in different spheres and along different dimensions. Let me take these in order, beginning with the economic.

II

EVER SINCE it began market reforms in the late 1970's, the PRC has become heavily dependent for its continued well-being on the outside world, and, in particular, on the United States. Without heavy inflows of American capital and technology, and without access to the huge U.S. market, China would not have been able to progress as far and as fast as it has. Whether or not the United States could have used its position of relative economic advantage for strategic purposes during this period, the fact is that, for the most part, it did not try. Despite some efforts in the late 1980's and early 1990's to punish China for violations of human rights and arms proliferation, U.S. economic pressure was half-hearted and largely ineffectual. By the mid-1990's, the United States was lifting most sanctions, loosening or abandoning most controls on dual-use technology exports to China, and moving to grant it status as a normal trading partner.

It did so based largely on the belief that trade leads to peace. Mutual economic exchange is assumed to forge a shared interest in good relations, and a powerful disincentive to conflict. According to advocates of "engagement" with the PRC, international trade and investment will fuel economic growth, economic growth will speed democratization, and a democratic China will be far less likely to use force or threats against other democracies, including the United States.

It is certainly possible that, if it continues to grow richer, China will also become, from the American perspective, more benign. But it is also conceivable that this may not happen. If it does not, the United States will be faced with a challenge with which it has not had to cope in over a century: a strategic rival that is economically and technologically dynamic, deeply engaged in the world economy, and whose total output may come eventually to approach America's own.

Will an era of more openly competitive relations be marked by renewed U.S. efforts to exert economic leverage on China? The answer will depend a great deal on how such an era begins. A sudden, severe crisis could galvanize American domestic opinion, overwhelm the objections of business groups and others with a strong vested interest in continued commercial contacts, and lead to the imposition of near-total restrictions on imports, exports, and capital and technology flows. But if the deterioration is gradual, a sufficient political consensus may not exist in the United States to support even limited sanctions. To the contrary, it is precisely when relations falter that arguments for keeping trade on an even keel will be advanced most strenuously.

As time passes, China will probably become even less susceptible to American economic pressure than it is today. Chinese exports to the United States may be large, but even now they are greatly overshadowed by China's exports to its Asian neighbors. And as important as the U.S. is as a source of capital, it now comes in only third among

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the five largest providers of direct foreign investment to China; the other four (Hong Kong, which serves as a conduit for Taiwanese investment on the mainland, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea) are all Asian players. In the future, the Chinese government will have a strong strategic incentive to encourage and expand such diversification, above all in order to lessen excessive dependence on the United States.

In the long run, China will become relatively less reliant not only on the United States but on the outside world generally. Rising incomes will mean a growing pool of domestic savings and a declining reliance on foreign investment. In time, the technological advance of Chinese industry will be fueled more by indigenous developments and less by ideas, techniques, and machinery imported from abroad. The maturing of its vast domestic market will probably also mean that trade will diminish as a share of GNP and that China will become less dependent on exports and imports than it is today (though at least in the medium term it is likely to depend *more* heavily on certain critical imports, especially of food and fuel).

As China develops and becomes more deeply integrated into the global economy, it will not only be less susceptible to economic pressure from others but more capable of exerting economic pressure of its own. This pressure need not even be deliberate to be felt: as the experience of the United States in the Western hemisphere suggests, a big, dynamic economy can exert an almost gravitational pull on the smaller units that surround it. The analyst Ross Munro has noted in *Orbis* that the rapid growth of China's economy has produced a significant expansion in its influence all along its interior land frontier, as its mostly poor neighbors in South, Southeast, and Central Asia have begun to look to it increasingly as a source of markets, aid, and business deals.

Beyond its immediate neighborhood, the sheer size of the potential Chinese market has also helped to create powerful business lobbies favoring good relations with the PRC. In the major industrial powers, these groups can be expected to pressure their own governments in favor of policies that happen also to be in Beijing's interest: easing restrictions on exports of capital and technology, avoiding sanctions, tariffs, or other market-closing measures that might provoke Chinese retaliation, and, in general, doing whatever is possible to maintain good bilateral relations and a "positive business climate."

The activities of pro-PRC lobbying groups may be perfectly legitimate and predictable; but in democratic societies they have nevertheless had the effect of dulling the reactions and limiting the strategic repertory of governments. These effects have been especially pronounced in the United States. Barring some truly severe crisis, trade with China will continue to exercise its muffling influence on American strategy.

Even if the United States should, at some point, adopt a more openly competitive stance, it would have great difficulty getting others to go along. This is not only because of genuine differences of perspective over how best to cope with China's increasing power and assertiveness, but also because each of the members of a potential coalition will be subject to its own domestic pressures. To get some sense of this, imagine, during the cold war, the debates on strategic policy that would have gone on within NATO if the members of the alliance had also been, to varying degrees, deeply engaged in economic exchange with the Soviet Union. As Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross conclude in their book *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress* (1997), "It is almost unthinkable that the rest of the world would unite to isolate China as the West did in the era of containment."

In addition to what it gains passively, as it were, simply by engaging with the rest of the world, China has also been actively deploying its growing economic weight to shape the strategic behavior of others. First, and most obviously, Beijing uses access to the Chinese market as a means of rewarding or punishing foreign firms and, through them, influencing their home governments. Ross Munro and Richard Bernstein relate in *The Coming Conflict with China* (1997) that PRC officials promoted an unusual array of business deals with American companies in the spring of 1994, just as the Clinton administration was considering revoking China's most-favored-nation status over human-rights violations. Two years later, having headed off this threat, Prime Minister Li Peng announced that China would buy $1.5-billion-worth of aircraft from Airbus Industrie rather than Boeing because, in his words, the Europeans did not "attach political strings to cooperation with China, unlike the Americans who arbitrarily resort to the threat of sanctions or the use of sanctions."

China has been especially assertive in attempting to exert direct economic influence over Taiwan. Following the election of Chen Shui-bian in the spring of 2000, the Beijing government began to warn Taiwanese companies with investments on

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the mainland that (according to a report in the *New York Times*) "they would be subject to unspecified sanctions if they advocated independence for Taiwan." To drive home the point, the PRC has evidently begun to make examples of companies whose chief executives are associated with the cause of independence. (In one case, a large petrochemical concern whose chairman supported Chen found its facilities on the mainland subjected to numerous inspections.) Even more visible is the case of Ah-mei, a Taiwanese singer popular on the mainland who performed the national anthem at Chen's inauguration. Her music and videos have since been banned from Chinese state-controlled media; in response to official pressure, Coca-Cola withdrew TV, radio, and billboard advertisements featuring her image.

BEIJING CLEARLY hopes to use economic threats and inducements, then, to discourage the United States from ever pursuing a more confrontational policy toward it. The same economic instruments could also prove extremely important in efforts to affect American interests in Asia, discouraging Japan and Korea from participating in the development of theater missile-defense systems, for example, or persuading Singapore to abandon its present policy of permitting U.S. naval vessels to dock at its ports. The PRC could also do more than in the past to separate the U.S. from its European allies by shifting business from American firms to their EU competitors.

The PRC has begun to get into the financial-diplomacy game as well, if so far on a rather modest scale. In 1994, China stole a march on India by financing, building, and equipping a $200-million coal mine in Bangladesh. And during the summer of 1997, as the Asian financial crisis was reaching its depths, China joined the IMF and a group of much wealthier Asian countries in extending a financial bailout package to Thailand—the first time that it had ever participated in such an effort. Eighteen months later, at the beginning of 1999, Thailand surprised the United States, its nominal ally, by signing a "Plan of Action for the 2lst Century" with China—an agreement described by one Thai observer as "a strategic move by China to seek an alliance to counter the influence of the United States." If the Thai example is any indication, economic assistance in various forms will probably become an increasingly significant means for China of winning friends and influencing people.

There are also other, more subtle financial instruments at its disposal. During the Asian crisis, China extracted the maximum diplomatic benefit from its (self-interested) decision not to devalue its currency despite sharp drops in the currencies of many of its smaller neighbors. It thereby earned plaudits as a responsible regional "citizen," an upholder of stability, and, in contrast to Japan, a country able to take tough economic decisions. But China's much-vaunted restraint may also have carried with it an implicit and more menacing message: the PRC is now, as one senior official of the People's Bank put it at the time, "a big player," and what it does or fails to do in the economic realm can have large and potentially devastating effects on the well-being of other, lesser players.

One final possibility: because China promotes exports while restricting imports, it has run substantial trade surpluses in recent years and accumulated large foreign-exchange reserves. In 1998, for example, the PRC's reserves stood at over $140 billion, second only to Japan's. If China continues to amass large reserves and if, as seems likely, the bulk of these are held in dollar-denominated assets, they could provide Beijing with an economic weapon against the United States. By dumping its reserves at the right moment, China might hope to trigger a run on the dollar, an increase in U.S interest rates, and perhaps a stock-market crash. It is true that such an attack, if it produced the intended immediate results, could also do serious damage to China's economy; the mutually destructive effects of attempts at currency manipulation and financial coercion have caused some analysts to compare them with nuclear weapons. But the prospect of mutual devastation does not necessarily provide an ironclad guarantee that a weapon will never be used.

The bottom line is simple: one way or another, China's economic growth will provide it with an increasing array of instruments with which to try to exert influence on other countries and, if it chooses, to carry forward a strategic competition with the United States.

III

THE SECOND dimension of a possible struggle for mastery in Asia will be military. From the early 1970's until (at the latest) the early 1990's, the United States and the PRC pursued what might be described as parallel rather than convergent military programs. While both countries were augmenting their capabilities and planning for future warfare, neither was explicitly or overtly focusing its activities on the other. Rather, for almost two decades, American and Chinese defense planners shared a

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common adversary: the Soviet Union. The weakening and subsequent collapse of the USSR removed the basis for this tacit Sino-American alliance, and also freed the two countries to devote more of their military resources to other potential rivals. Over the course of the 1990's, they came increasingly to regard each other in just this light.

Starting in 1985, China's armed forces, at the direction of their top political leaders, downgraded preparations for an "early, major, and nuclear war" with the Soviet Union and began to focus on the possibility of local, limited wars on China's periphery. This change had the general effect of directing the attention of the Chinese military outward—away from the need to absorb a massive enemy nuclear attack and subsequent invasion and toward the problem of projecting power at least some distance from China's frontiers. Then, the 1991 Gulf war heightened Chinese awareness of the military impact of new technologies and, partly as a result, caused Chinese planners to concentrate with new intensity on the possibility of a future conflict with the United States. According to Allen Whiting, writing in the *China Quarterly*, "war games played against the American 'enemy' have been standard since 1991."

For a variety of reasons, the United States has been slower to focus similar attention on China. During the early post-cold-war years, American armed forces were preoccupied first with fighting the Gulf war, then with managing reductions in their size and budget, and finally with carrying out a variety of operations, from peacekeeping missions of varying scale to a sizable air war in Kosovo. Throughout the 1990's and down to the present there was also a strong political inhibition against considering China a future military rival.

The turning point probably came in 1995-96, when China fired ballistic missiles in the Taiwan Strait. Since then, as the *Washington Post* correspondent Thomas Ricks has reported, U.S. military planners have been devoting greater energy to potential Asian contingencies and, however reluctantly, thinking about a possible confrontation with China. If present trends continue, over the next several years the United States and China will move toward an increasingly obvious military competition, with several facets.

Offense vs. Defense

CHINA HAS placed heavy emphasis on the development and deployment of missiles: short-, intermediate-, and long-range, nuclear and conventional, cruise and ballistic.

Since the mid-1990's, the PRC has added substantially to its arsenal of short-range conventional ballistic missiles (the DF-11's and DF-15's), and by 2005 it is expected to have roughly 600 of these weapons within range of Taiwan.* Older, liquid-fueled, intermediate-range missiles capable of striking targets throughout East and South Asia with nuclear weapons (DF-3A's) are being supplemented with newer, more accurate, solid-fueled missiles (DF-21A's). Finally, China's small force of fixed, liquid-fueled intercontinental-range rockets (DF-5's and DF-5A's) is expected to be upgraded over the course of the next decade to include two new types of land-based mobile missile (the DF-31 and DF-41, both of which may be capable of carrying multiple warheads) and one submarine-launched ballistic missile (the JL-2). If, as is widely assumed, some of these weapons are equipped with multiple warheads, the number of weapons deliverable against the United States will rise into the low hundreds. If the number of new launchers deployed is larger than expected, that total could grow to as many as 1,000.

China's interest in missiles may be due in part to the fact that, as opposed to manned long-range aircraft, submarines, or surface naval vessels, they are relatively cheap, comparatively simple, and potentially very effective. While the Chinese air force and navy continue to work at acquiring and improving more traditional kinds of military systems, missiles, as the analyst Mark Stokes observes, "are rapidly becoming the sole credible long-range firepower projection asset which the [military] has in its inventory, and this will remain likely true for the foreseeable future."

At the same time that China has been augmenting its missile forces, the United States has been developing and moving toward the deployment of both national and theater ballistic-missile defense systems. Our intensified interest in defense was not driven initially by concern over China, but rather by the threat from "rogue" states like North Korea and Iran. Nevertheless, at least since the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, the question of the possible utility of defenses against Chinese missiles has inevitably arisen. For their part, and whatever American decision-makers may say or believe, Chinese strategists probably *assume* that our missile-defense programs are directed in large measure at blunting their offensive forces.

For the moment, PRC planners have reason to

* In the aftermath of the Gulf war, the Chinese military also reportedly intensified its efforts to develop long-range land-attack cruise missiles.

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hope that American defensive deployments will be delayed by some combination of technical problems, budgetary concerns, domestic political developments, and diplomatic pressure. But they are unlikely to be so imprudent as to ignore the possibility that, sooner or later, some kinds of defenses will be deployed. Even a limited national missile-defense system could well be capable of intercepting all of the PRC's present ICBM force. If they cannot derail the U.S. National Missile Defense (NMD) program through diplomatic means, the Chinese will therefore want to be in a position to defeat it militarily, probably by deploying larger numbers of missiles, at least some of which will be capable of carrying either decoys or multiple warheads. (Another form of insurance might be submarines carrying long-range cruise missiles, or ballistic missiles that could be fired at depressed trajectories.)

Then there is the prospect that the United States may deploy *theater* missile defenses (TMD), either alone or in conjunction with its regional friends and allies. A working TMD system would decrease China's confidence in its ability to intimidate other Asian countries by threatening to attack them with nuclear weapons; it might also seriously complicate Chinese hopes of disrupting American military operations in the western Pacific by quickly disabling a handful of fixed bases and facilities. A Japan able to shelter behind a defensive shield might also feel freer to develop its own offensive capabilities, perhaps even including nuclear weapons. Last but not least, a TMD system deployed on or around Taiwan could blunt what is now China's most potent threat against the island, perhaps opening the way for moves toward formal independence.

China's options for responding to these possibilities are similar to those it has in dealing with NMD, although, because of the shorter distances involved, some countermeasures may be easier and less expensive to implement. Preventing deployment in the first place through diplomacy and intimidation would be an obvious first choice. Preparing to swamp a TMD system with ever-larger numbers of warheads would be another. Circumventing defenses by developing long-range cruise missiles or other means of attack would be a third. Finally, if the United States and its allies seemed to be developing defenses sufficiently capable to blunt a *conventional* missile attack, the Chinese might seek to up the ante by adding to their force of short- and intermediate-range missiles equipped with nuclear warheads. A defensive system able to shoot down 75 percent of the missiles fired against it might look very impressive against an all-conventional attack, but much less so against one that could contain a mix of more and less destructive warheads.

Projecting Power

THE UNITED States is today able to project conventional air and naval power virtually unimpeded anywhere in the western Pacific, including all along China's eastern seaboard and, conceivably, hundreds of miles inland. American forces, brought to bear at long distances, and with the help of a handful of local friends and allies, pose the single greatest obstacle to any Chinese effort to establish itself as the dominant power in East Asia. Chinese planners must fear that, in a crisis or future conflict, the U.S. could close China's ports, unleash precision conventional attacks with cruise missiles and stealthy manned aircraft against targets on the Chinese mainland, and, by sinking Chinese submarines and surface ships, break an attempted blockade of Taiwan. If they are to displace the United States as East Asia's dominant military power, Chinese strategists must come up with ways of countering American forces.

I have already mentioned one such way: the possible use of missiles against U.S. regional bases. At present and for the foreseeable future, the ability of the United States to sustain air and naval operations in the western Pacific depends heavily on access to a small number of facilities in Japan and South Korea. If these (plus a handful of others in Singapore, Australia, and perhaps in the Philippines and Guam) can be destroyed or rendered unusable, America's ability to project power will fall precipitously.

Next in order of technical difficulty for China would be acquiring weapons with which to sink American surface ships, and especially the aircraft carriers on which the United States now relies so heavily. In most conflicts involving U.S. and Chinese forces, these vessels would have to operate at the far western edge of the Pacific and might therefore be especially vulnerable to attacks by cruise missiles, torpedoes, and intelligent mines. Such weapons could be unleashed in large numbers from swarms of relatively inexpensive platforms, including small submarines and surface ships, and remotely-piloted aerial vehicles. Anticarrier attacks by land-based ballistic missiles are another possibility.

More challenging than sinking carriers but of potentially even greater benefit would be the capacity to disable American intelligence, communi-

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cations, and navigation satellites and to disrupt U.S. information systems, both in the region and beyond. In contrast to China, which in conflicts close to home would enjoy the benefits of interior lines of communication, the United States would have to control its forces at great distances from home and across a vast theater of operations. Even temporary disruptions could have devastating and potentially disastrous consequences. This is something that has not escaped the attention of Chinese observers. According to Mark Stokes, "Chinese strategists and engineers perceive U.S. reliance on communications, reconnaissance, and navigation satellites as a potential 'Achilles' heel,'" and they are looking for ways to attack it, including by means of ground-based lasers, jammers, and kinetic kill vehicles.

Defeating American power projection will also require defending Chinese territory against airborne attack. Toward this end China has apparently been devoting considerable resources to developing a nationwide air-defense system capable of locating, tracking, and intercepting aircraft and cruise missiles, including those with stealthy characteristics. Improved coastal defenses, perhaps including anti-submarine-warfare ships, attack submarines, and aircraft, could also force U.S. cruise-missile-launching submarines to operate at greater distances from China's shores, thereby reducing the array of targets they could cover.

In this regard, and more generally, the thrust of Chinese programs will be to push American forces back and, at the very least, seriously complicate their efforts to operate in the western Pacific.

Deterrence

For decades we have promised, explicitly or otherwise, to defend our Asian allies if they were attacked by China. Until very recently we have done so from a position of virtual immunity to direct Chinese attack on our own soil. The development of Chinese long-range strike capabilities and, in particular, a visible and substantial increase in China's ability to hit the continental United States with nuclear weapons could raise profound questions in Asia about the continuing utility of the American nuclear "umbrella."

Assuming for the moment that the United States does *not* go forward with a national missile-defense system, the deployment by China of a fairly limited number of sea- and land-based mobile missiles will effectively guarantee it a secure second-strike capability. As things now stand, the small Chinese ICBM force would take hours to make ready for launch, and it could conceivably be destroyed in a preemptive American attack, perhaps one involving only the use of precision conventional weapons. A larger, more diverse, and more mobile force of solid-fueled rockets will be far less vulnerable. Such a force could conceivably also be used to conduct limited attacks on U.S. military targets rather than simply lobbing a few large and inaccurate warheads at a handful of American cities.

In certain respects, the next ten to fifteen years may thus come to resemble the early stages of the cold war. In the late 1940's and well into the 1950's, the United States enjoyed a huge advantage in its nuclear competition with the Soviet Union. American forces operating from bases around the Eurasian periphery (and, with the introduction of the B-52 bomber, from American soil) were poised to deliver nuclear weapons virtually anywhere in the USSR; for a long time, the Soviets had no comparable capability. Yet even the *anticipated* Soviet development of intercontinental bombers and ballistic missiles triggered major worries within the Western alliance. American policy-makers were long preoccupied with convincing their NATO allies, the Soviets, and perhaps themselves that the United States would, indeed, intervene in a European war even if in doing so it risked nuclear attack on its own soil.

Much of what the United States did in Europe—maintaining and augmenting ground forces, deploying large numbers of tactical nuclear weapons, tolerating (and even encouraging) the acquisition of national nuclear forces by at least two key allies, and increasing the flexibility of American strategic nuclear forces—was motivated by the desire to strengthen deterrence in the face of increasing Soviet intercontinental-strike capabilities. Until nearly the final moments of the cold war, the Soviets, for their part, tried to raise doubts about American resolve as a way of weakening the Western alliance. There is already some evidence that China may try to use similar tactics to undermine the U.S. position in Asia.

In 1995, a high-ranking Chinese official was widely quoted as having told a visitor that the United States would not come to Taiwan's rescue because, in the end, Americans cared more about Los Angeles than Taipei. More recently, during the run-up to the March 2000 Taiwanese presidential election, China's official armed-forces newspaper warned that, unlike Iraq or Yugoslavia, China is "a country that has certain abilities of launching strategic counterattack and the capacity of launching a

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long-distance strike. . . . It is not a wise move to be at war with a country such as China, a point which the U.S. policy-makers know fairly well also."

These threats were evidently intended to give pause to anyone contemplating possible conventional strikes on Chinese forces or territory in the context of a fight over Taiwan. In the future, Chinese strategists may issue more generalized warnings, perhaps suggesting that the growth in their striking power means that the United States will have to contemplate sacrificing Washington to save Tokyo, or Seoul, or Sidney, or Manila, or Singapore. Such comments would be directed more at Asian than at American audiences, and their aim would be not so much to deter the United States as to raise questions about the ability of the United States to deter China. The ultimate aim would be to raise doubts in the minds of Asian observers as to the continuing value of American security commitments.

IV

ANY INTENSIFIED military rivalry between the United States and China will be accompanied by a stepped-up competition in the political or diplomatic realm, which is the third dimension of a possible future struggle in Asia. The central issue of this particular contest would be the making and breaking of alliances.

As in the military arena, the United States starts with a number of very considerable advantages: it enjoys good relations with most countries in East Asia and has alliance ties or other security connections with many of them, including most of the wealthiest and most powerful. China, on the other hand, has problematic relationships with a number of major players in both East and South Asia and its closest collaborators (North Korea, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Russia) suffer from profound domestic liabilities.

The United States also benefits from what is, for the moment at least, a major geopolitical advantage: the possible threat posed by the sheer magnitude of its material power is offset to a degree by its remoteness from the heart of Asia. Because it is far away, the U.S. is less menacing than China, which is nearby and thus potentially overwhelming. Indeed, as China's capabilities grow, there may be a strong tendency on the part of the other Asian states to draw closer to one another, and to the United States, in order to counterbalance Chinese power and preserve their own independence.

If power-balancing were automatic and inevitable, the United States could afford to sit back and let nature take its course. But the societies of Northeast and Southeast Asia also have long historical experience with Chinese preponderance, and they could choose to live with it again in the future, especially if the only alternative appeared to be a period of protracted and dangerous rivalry between China and the United States. Moreover, if the United States appears weak and vacillating, or if its withdrawal from the region begins to seem inevitable, these countries may conclude that they have little choice but to cut the best deal they can.

The aim of Chinese diplomatic strategy, therefore, will be to turn America's geographical remoteness from an advantage to a disadvantage, weakening existing American relationships and preventing the formation of new ones, feeding doubts about U.S. resolve and staying power, and making China's rise seem both as inevitable, and as unthreatening, as possible.

How might this be done?

First, Chinese leaders could transform their country's longstanding but largely rhetorical opposition to bilateral military alliances into a central feature of their foreign policy. In the 1970's and 1980's, the Chinese were willing to accept that America's Asian alliances served the useful purpose of countering Soviet "hegemonism." During the 1990's, China preferred that Japan continue under American tutelage rather than being left free to expand its power and pursue its own objectives. But, as has already begun to happen, deteriorating U.S.-PRC relations and stepped-up efforts at U.S.-Japan security cooperation will cause Chinese strategists to reexamine their permissive position and ultimately to take a much tougher, anti-alliance stance.

Accompanying this shift could be the amplification of another persistent theme in Chinese diplomacy. As it works to displace the United States from Asia, China will intensify its campaign against "hegemony" by criticizing America's cultural and economic "imperialism" and attacking its arrogance and intrusiveness. China will seek friends among those in Asia (and beyond) who feel they have suffered at the hands of U.S. corporations, American-led international institutions, and/or American efforts to enforce conformity with U.S. views on political liberties and human rights. At the same time that it seeks to gain the benefits of greater integration into the world economy, China could also emerge as a leading critic of the ills of globalization and a leading proponent of various kinds of regional (as opposed to global and hence American-dominated) institutions. Chinese policy may even take on

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a racial aspect, perhaps appealing to those who share ethnic and cultural characteristics across East Asia or, more generally, making the case against "the West" and for "Asia for the Asians."

As it has done in recent years, China will no doubt become an even more enthusiastic participant in multilateral security dialogues and other forums in Asia, using them to convey the image of a good international citizen and an open, unthreatening power. Active Chinese participation will also ensure that multilateral mechanisms cannot be used against the PRC's interests. As relations with the United States degenerate, China may also begin to advocate *new* institutions that will exclude "non-Asian" powers and seek "local" solutions to regional economic, environmental, and security problems.

Its strictures against bilateral alliances notwithstanding, China will also attempt to develop its own "strategic partnerships," both in Asia and beyond. In some cases (as in its current dealings with Russia, Israel, and a number of European countries), China's goal will be to obtain military hardware and advanced technology. In others (as, most likely, with Pakistan) the PRC will be supporting the enemy of an enemy (India).

Next, in order to circumvent U.S. efforts to apply economic sanctions or technology controls, China may hope to cultivate a much closer relationship with a more independent and perhaps openly anti-American European Union. In the Persian Gulf region, it may align itself more openly with Iran as a way of deflecting American attention and scarce military resources from East Asia, and in order to ensure its own access to oil. In continental Southeast Asia (especially Myanmar and Thailand), it may use threats and inducements to gain access to facilities for its own military forces or to deny access to the forces of its rivals. In Central Asia, it may work to establish client regimes that will protect oil pipelines and control Islamist groups that might otherwise foment discontent among China's own non-Han minorities.

Finally, while China will probably continue to shun any pretension to global power, it may provide assistance to states or nonstate actors around the world that see themselves as being opposed to the United States. Like the Soviet Union before it, albeit more for geopolitical than for ideological reasons, China could become a low-key but important supporter of rebel movements, "rogue states," and terrorist groups throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Central and Latin America.

But it is in East Asia, their main sphere of activity, that Chinese strategists will most want to focus attention. In order to do this, they will probably aim first to secure their continental "rear areas." Toward this end, China will work hard to maintain a good relationship with Russia and to avoid being drawn into debilitating conflicts in Central Asia. In South Asia, although China will probably opt to continue its present policy of supporting Pakistan to distract India, it could also try to take India out of the larger strategic equation by offering a spheres-of-influence arrangement that would leave India dominant on the subcontinent in exchange for its continued nonalignment.

In East Asia itself, China may seek to execute the diplomatic equivalent of a pincer movement, applying pressure from the north (the Korean peninsula) and the south (the South China Sea) in order to gain its primary objectives at the center: the acquisition of Taiwan and the neutralization of Japan. Following the success of an initial gambit this past spring, the Chinese will probably continue to press North Korea to negotiate with the South, while at the same time attempting to build themselves up as the indispensable intermediary. In return for its continued help in delivering North Korea, China may hope to gain some assurances from South Korea about the role of the United States on the peninsula. Even if Chinese strategists cannot extract much in the way of concrete promises, they may nevertheless come to believe that progress toward reunification will unleash popular forces in the South that will lead irresistibly to an American withdrawal. Continued improvement in North-South relations would also help to lull Japan and undermine U.S. efforts to build support for theater missile defenses.

While these events are unfolding, the PRC will use a variety of tactics to aid the further extension of its influence in Southeast Asia. Here, in contrast to its role as peacemaker in Korea, it may show a harder, tougher face. An increase in piracy (perhaps supported covertly by China) could provide the justification for an expansion of naval activities in the South China Sea, enabling the PRC to assert its territorial claims in the area. China may also seek to encourage the activities of ethnic and religious separatist movements in Indonesia and the Philippines in the hope that, if these countries become wracked by civil unrest, they will be much less capable of acting to oppose the growth in Chinese power. After years of tolerating Singapore's military cooperation with the United States, China may also begin to press that country to choose sides or, at the very

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least, abandon its tilt toward the U.S. And if Chinese leaders feel the need to flex their muscles, and perhaps also to demonstrate the limits of American power and commitment, they may pick a fight they think they can win, most likely by provoking and then pummeling Vietnam in what their military planners have called a quick "local war with high-tech characteristics."

The consolidation of China's position to its north and south will set the stage for the final resolution of the core strategic issues of Japan and Taiwan. With regard to the former, China's goal must be to detach it from the United States without at the same time stimulating a resurgence of Japanese assertiveness and militarism. Despite their oft-expressed fears, Chinese strategists may become less worried about Japan as that country's population ages, its political system continues to founder, and its economy fails to regain its former luster. A Korean settlement that results in a greatly reduced U.S. role on the peninsula could yield a corresponding increase in Japanese discomfort at being the last major remaining outpost of American military power in Asia. If so, the moment may have arrived for China to offer Japan some kind of "grand bargain," perhaps involving a mutual non-aggression pact and a pledge to maintain freedom of navigation in the South China Sea in exchange for a sharp curtailment or outright abrogation of the U.S.-Japan alliance. At this point, if not before, Taiwan would have little choice but to accept the PRC's terms for reunification.

V

THESE, THEN, are the main elements of the possible struggle to come in Asia. Of course, it is one thing for Chinese strategists to fantasize about easing the U.S. out of East Asia without firing a shot; actually doing so is another matter altogether. For one thing, if the PRC is impatient, if it underestimates the impact of its actions on its opponents, if it is excessively high-handed or overly brutal, it could well wind up stimulating precisely the kind of determined, unified response that could foil its plans and block its ambitions. For another thing, it is conceivable that China will mellow with the passage of time, or suffer from domestic weaknesses that will prevent it from pursuing its objectives in a consistent and effective way. And most important of all, the United States could either adjust its current policies so as to make an open Sino-American confrontation less likely or, if conflict cannot be avoided, prepare for its eventuality while simultaneously preserving America's own position in Asia.

If I have purposely refrained from dwelling on American strategic options in the coming decades, it is hardly because we are without them—whether economic, military, or political. Rather, it is because the first order of business is to see the situation plain—namely, that in several important respects a U.S.-PRC strategic competition is already under way, and there is a good chance that it is only going to become more intense and open. In recognizing these realities, the Chinese are well ahead of the United States.

Militarily, the PRC will continue to do what it is already doing: working to offset or neutralize current U.S. advantages, increasing its ability to target U.S. forces, facilities, and command-and-communications systems in, around, and over the western Pacific while improving its capacity to deter or defend against American attacks on its own forces and territory. These military activities will likely be accompanied by an effort to break up the American-led alliance system in Asia and ultimately to detach the United States from most of its present partners and to push it as far back across the Pacific as possible. To this end, the PRC will use every instrument at its disposal, including especially its growing economic clout.

In this respect, what one needs to bear in mind is that China will be a very different kind of strategic competitor from the Soviet Union. The PRC's size, dynamism, and relative openness confer a much greater ability to shape the behavior of other countries, thus helping to dissuade the United States from confrontation, diminishing the effectiveness of any unilateral American attempt to use economic instruments against it, driving a wedge between the U.S. and the other advanced industrial nations, and enhancing China's own capacity to exert influence over the countries in its region. The threat all this holds out to American interests can be countered, but first it must be acknowledged.

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A Free and Democratic China?

Arthur Waldron

FIFTY LONG years have passed since Communist China came into being, and there is still no sign that Communism is on the way out. The blood of Tiananmen Square has been forgotten. Cities like Shanghai are cleaner and more prosperous than anyone can remember. Chinese leaders are sought-after guests in the United States and elsewhere. On their visits, they speak of many matters, but one thing they make absolutely clear is that they have no intention of altering the Communist system of authority. On this point, they meet with little if any resistance from their hosts.

A strong U.S. constituency supports a placatory approach to the People's Republic, an approach whose fruits were most strikingly on display in September's bipartisan vote in the Senate to remove any restraints on trade with Beijing. It is not that Americans who think and write and plan about China endorse dictatorship; it is rather that they discount the possibility of democracy, and prefer the familiar to the unknown. Many of them also believe that, when all is said and done, China is fundamentally on the right track, being (they maintain) economically in better shape than Russia and getting freer with every passing day. That being so, there is every reason for the United States to resume its traditional approach to Asia—which for almost a century has placed China at the center—and unhesitatingly to bring China into the inner councils of the international community. Such an approach, the argument concludes, is both realistic and likely to contribute to peace and stability.

The trouble is, however, that China will not be able to play the role that has been assigned to it unless its domestic situation is truly in order—which is very far from being the case. The USSR, about which we entertained similar hopes in the late 1980's, collapsed suddenly and with a terrible thud; and even though, at the time, that country was relatively isolated, the impact of its collapse still reverberates ten years later. To suppose that China can avoid a similar fate is to blind oneself to reality.

FOREIGN OBSERVERS have regularly been impressed, indeed overwhelmed, by one particular quality of China: its apparent homogeneity. Even today, many have been led to imagine that a mysterious cement of shared "Chineseness" somehow binds that country together in a way that more diverse societies can only admire. But Chinese homogeneity is superficial at best. Beneath the surface lie the same differences in belief, ambition, and interest as in any other society. Shared ethnicity does not render China immune to the basic challenges faced by every human community, nor can it substitute for legitimate and functional political institutions.

It is, indeed, the lack of such institutions that has

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been the source of the half-dozen big or small civil wars in China since the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911, not to speak of the massive attempts at political reconstruction during the same period, most recently through the imposition of Communism. None of these experiments has proved conclusive or enduring. China's remarkable unity and historical continuity are indeed an impressive human achievement—but also a rather fragile one.

How has this fragile achievement been sustained politically? The answer is, through radical simplification and standardization. Chinese society is constructed out of modular units—whether farming families in traditional times or interchangeable members of "the masses" under Communism. In and among themselves, these units are without cohesiveness. They are, as the early-20th-century revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen put it, a sheet of loose sand; or, in the words of an ancient source, a wall of pebbles; or again, according to a recent analyst, a pyramid of ball bearings. Historically, what has bound these granules together is a few simple rules and central institutions and a moral community forged—in olden times—by universal study of the Confucian classics.

Under Communism, the model worked, and still works, like this: only two institutions, the party and the military, are national in scope, and even then only for people at the very top. Below that level there are provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities; but the basic building block of society is the *danwei*, or "unit." This can be a factory or a farm, a cruise ship or a university department. It is where each person collects his pay, makes his friends, gets his education, receives his medical care, obtains his housing—in effect, where he spends his life. The *danwei* makes no sense economically, but it is the basic administrative entity and also the latter-day substitute for moral community, suffused with Communist mythology and slogans.

In the decade since the Tiananmen Square massacre, much has changed in China—but mostly economically, and even in that realm more tenuously than is commonly understood. Once order was restored in Beijing, the leadership concentrated on getting more money to people as part of an implicit bargain: if you let us stay in power, we will see to it that your standard of living rises. Both sides have kept that particular bargain rather well.

Thanks to the liberation of China's own potential, and thanks still more to foreign connections, trade, and investment, the standard of living for Chinese urban populations, particularly along the coast, has risen impressively. But economic development is radically uneven and has led to regional differentiation and inequality. Of the country's overall GDP, almost half is accounted for by a few major urban areas and their hinterlands: greater Guangzhou, greater Shanghai, and Beijing-Tianjin. More than half of China's current balance-of-payments surplus is accounted for by a single province, Guangdong, alone.

Rich areas do not need the center, but poor ones desperately need redistribution. New wealth, however, is mostly staying at the provincial level and not reaching the center. The result is that the national government in Beijing runs a deficit, and has been politically weakened vis-à-vis the provinces. Debt is growing rapidly, and recentralization is being attempted.

AND WHAT, in the meantime, is happening to the *danwei*? With all the new competition, it is being hollowed out. People who were forced to join a *danwei* 50 years ago, when Chinese Communism was confidently building a new order, are now being told that they must find their own jobs, buy their own housing, pay for their own medical care, and finance their own retirements. In place of the nicely fitted mosaic of delineated units, economic development is creating new complexities and masses of new and often conflicting interests. Tens of millions of people have been uprooted and cast out of the only community they had ever been allowed to know. No wonder farmers in Jiangxi are rioting, and industrial workers in the northeast are protesting unemployment and the misappropriation of state property.

This human tragedy nicely illustrates one of the basic errors of the Marxist approach to history. According to the Marxist scheme, societies are initially full of contradictions that originate in the economy; but, with each sweep of the dialectic, this complexity is reduced until, at the penultimate stage, what is left is a handful of capitalists embodying one set of interests and a mass of proletarians embodying another. Communist rule is therefore easy to achieve, in theory. Once you flick away the remaining capitalists, you have a society with a single set of interests, millions of homogeneous proletarians all wanting the same thing.

Unfortunately, Marx got the arrows of history backward. Societies do not become more homogeneous and uniform as they advance economically; they become less so. Differences do not disappear; they multiply. The march of progress does not make governance easier; it makes it ever more difficult.

The current Chinese system is based on this Marxist error. The Communists created millions of basic units—*danweis*—on the assumption that they would share common interests. To the limited extent that they ever did, they no longer do. In the meantime, no provision was made for a genuine adminis-

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trative or social or moral structure to hold things together. The result is that economic growth today is taking place in an institutional vacuum.

Private enterprise is by far China's most vigorous sector today. Nevertheless, the party still tries to keep control in its own hands—to the severe detriment of, precisely, the growth that helps maintain the party in power.

One problem is plain old corruption. If an entrepreneur needs a license, he must pay a bribe to get it, which implicates both him and the official who takes it. Since both are in violation of the law, both are also subject to blackmail by others. The resulting environment inhibits enterprise, to say the least.

But there is more. Roughly 90 percent of all publicly traded stocks in China are of entities controlled by the government. Thus, when foreigners (or Chinese) invest, they are usually buying bureaucracies and the bureaucrats who run them—pieces of state enterprises, packaged for sale. Private companies have little access to credit, and there are no solid laws governing their status or rights.

This is why, despite the abundance of entrepreneurial, technical, and managerial skill in China, there are no world-beating private Chinese corporations. Instead, the government continues to waste capital through nonmarket allocations and interventions that will end up distorting the newly emerging information industry just as surely as they distorted the smokestack industries a generation ago.

Nor do the problems finish there. Entrepreneurs are an element of civil society, but the party is not yet reconciled to the existence of a civil society. Although it would obviously be better all around to create objective and clear rules, as well as independent mechanisms like laws and courts, a free press and freedom of worship, under such a scheme there would be no role for the party. And so the party controls the press and stifles religion for the same reason it stifles entrepreneurship: because both economic and social development require space that Communism cannot either provide or accommodate.

How, in the face of these contradictions, does the party propose to maintain its rule? Some Chinese leaders now seem to think this can be done by importing political legitimacy from abroad: through meetings and photo opportunities with foreign heads of state, participation in the United Nations, the WTO, and other international organizations, the Olympics, and so forth. President Jiang Zemin recently spent an hour being interviewed on American TV by Mike Wallace; he has yet to do the same on Chinese television.

The difficulty here is that although you can (up to a point) substitute imported investment and entrepreneurs and managers for your own indigenous banking and private enterprise, you cannot import social and political order from abroad. In neighboring Hong Kong, political candidates go door to door ringing bells. In Taiwan's recent presidential campaign, one hopeful, James Soong, reportedly visited every one of the island's roughly 3,000 villages in pursuit of votes (he came in a close second). No one can imagine a similar scene in Communist China, for the simple reason that the government has no firm domestic base and true local politics is nonexistent.

There have been, to be sure, some halfway measures of reform of the type employed by Mikhail Gorbachev in the former Soviet Union. There are local elections in some areas. The press displays a good deal of Gorbachev-style *glasnost*, or openness. The *Beijing Youth Daily* looks a lot like the courageous and muckraking *Apple Daily* in Hong Kong: it carries story after story documenting abuse and malfeasance, and sound investigative journalism well researched and vividly presented. Only one thing is missing: useful generalization and systemic analysis. Each story has the same moral (this is a terrible lapse, someone is not performing his job, we must do better), but as to why the lapses are occurring, or whether they have anything to do with the general structure of government and society—silence. *Glasnost* exposes (or creates) grievances without either accountability or the means of redress.

In the USSR, Gorbachev hoped that *glasnost* would lead the party to scrape away the scales of corruption to reveal the good Leninist metal below. What he discovered was that there *was* no good metal; corruption was the system, and scraping only weakened its key structural elements. The anticorruption campaign now under way in China faces exactly the same problem. Since corruption is now, in effect, not a blemish on the system but rather the system itself, attacks on it have the effect of destroying the party's structure and chain of command. Cadres at every level are fearful, and will turn even more completely to their own interests and self-preservation. No one in his right mind is going to behave loyally or altruistically.

Education, economic development, urbanization, communication, increased knowledge of the world—all these forces help to create citizens. Ever since economic change began, China has been manufacturing potential citizens in large numbers, particularly in the coastal cities. But what happens if you have citizens-in-the-making and no

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democracy for them to participate in? The answer is chronic and irresolvable tension. Out of this situation three possibilities can arise: breakdown, military rule, or genuine political reform.

The first of these is easy to sketch. If present trends continue, we will see a steady rise in social unrest, crime, and corruption, and a steady weakening of the party's grip. This may be counterbalanced by occasional attempts to lash out, which will undermine economic development, the one thing that gives people hope and the regime respectability. Or we may see attempts to ameliorate things by means of limited, party-controlled political reform. This might release pressure for a while, but it might also, as in the USSR, unleash overwhelmingly powerful social forces. In either case, the eventual result could easily be a partial or all-out struggle for political power of the kind we have seen repeatedly in Chinese history.

Which brings us to the prospect of military rule. In today's official Chinese propaganda, Communist ideology already takes second place to nationalism, and the nationalism being promoted is not a healthy brand of patriotism but a resentful and somewhat xenophobic blend that draws on many of the most unattractive streams of 20th-century politics. In the year 2003, Jiang Zemin will reportedly give up the presidency (his governmental post) and the general secretaryship (his party post) but remain on the central military commission. By so doing, he will make it clear that neither the government nor the party is the ultimate locus of power in today's China.

A dictatorial and highly nationalistic regime is perhaps the most worrisome possibility of all for China's neighbors and for the United States. Many of the elements of such a regime are already in place as a result of the massive military-spending program that continues despite weak government finances and pressing needs in other areas. A formal imposition of military rule might come if the party itself begins to split over the question of how to handle growing civil unrest, as has happened numerous times in the past.

No mechanism exists to resolve such problems except to call in the military. How was the Cultural Revolution ended in 1967? By the army. How were Mao's chosen successors ousted from office in 1976? By the army. How was the crisis of 1989 resolved? By military force against the people—Tiananmen Square—*and* against "liberal" members of the party. Zhao Ziyang, one such liberal who was then the country's prime minister, is still detained at home, and his colleagues are in prison or on blacklists. (Even within the party, there is no order.)

A real crisis may arrive if the army is ever called upon to do something like Tiananmen Square again. Soldiers see their mission as defending the country against foreign enemies, not as shooting their unarmed fellow citizens in order to keep the party in power. So one can imagine a day when, instead of doing as instructed, a Chinese general will take over and then go on television, saying in his first breath that "Communism is nonsense, the party is made up of criminals, and we have arrested them" and in his second breath that "we are all Chinese, strong and proud of our homeland. We need order and discipline."

Of course, any such move, though it might bring unity for a while, suffers from exactly the same defect as Communist authoritarianism: no mechanism except force for resolving disputes. Even more than the current regime, a military regime is likely to recentralize, a move that classically triggers civil war. Not only would a China of this kind be unstable and a menace to its own people, it would be a menace to all of Asia.

STABLE POLITICAL order will come in China only through constitutional democracy. Though this strikes many people as a farfetched idea, it is nevertheless an idea with roots in China itself. Democracy was promised by the last rulers of the Qing dynasty in 1908, in the form of a constitutional monarchy with an elected, bicameral legislature and a responsible cabinet. With the overthrow of the monarchy in 1911, a republican form of government was, indeed, attempted for a decade or so, though I stress the word *form*; the reality was military rule.

By 1924, at any rate, the experiment was effectively over, and a Kuomintang-led coalition, which included Communists, was adopting an openly military-nationalist profile. Not coincidentally, this was only two years after Mussolini had established a fascist state in Italy and parliaments across Europe had begun to fold their tents as impatience with debate and compromise led to a general fascination with authoritarian solutions. Unlike in Europe, however, democracy never returned to China, which fell under the dictatorial rule first of the Kuomintang and then of the Communists. Perhaps that is why many observers, Chinese and foreign alike, have dismissed the country's failed attempt at popular sovereignty as no more than a bad comedy, an embarrassment.

Still, the democratic ideal did not just die. Though never fulfilled, the demand for genuine citizenship and representative government was the dominant theme in 20th-century Chinese politics. Popular pressure forced Chiang Kaishek to convene a national assembly in 1936, and national elections were held in 1948. By the latter date, Mao Zedong had seized the democratic mantle: many Chinese actually expected

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him to allow *more* freedom than had Chiang, a fact that contributed greatly to his victory in the civil war.

Mao tacitly acknowledged these hopes by creating, in his first administration, the appearance of democracy while maintaining Communist dominance. Thus, in the provisional government of 1949, two bodies had a small non-Communist majority and two a small Communist majority. Only the People's Revolutionary Military Council was entirely in the hands of Communists; but that was all that was needed.

That was then, however, and now is now. Is there any chance at all for parliamentary democracy in today's China? Whenever I voice my own, positive convictions on this score, whether in the U.S. or in Asia, the response, particularly from non-Chinese, is invariably skeptical if not dismissive. Who is going to be in charge, an eminent American scholar asked me on one public occasion. Answering his own question, he assured our audience that it would not be the educated and presumably trustworthy coastal Chinese but—horrors—those millions upon millions of peasants in the countryside. The name of Hitler also comes up frequently, as in: Hitler was elected democratically, too, and look where *that* led. Another objection is that a democratic China would necessarily be even more nationalistic and warlike than the Communists—or, as Ambassador Chas Freeman argued in a recent debate, "a democratic China would already have attacked Taiwan."

Clearly, many people who profess sympathy for China distrust the Chinese people. This seeming contradiction may be just the flip side of the stereotype of Chinese homogeneity, pointing to the menace and irrationality—the "Yellow Peril"—that allegedly lurk beneath the surface cohesiveness and that only further underline the need for authoritarian control. But it is a false and condescending view—as, most recently, the contrary examples of Taiwan and Hong Kong show.

Taiwan has been holding real elections for more than a dozen years now. The latest one was a watershed: what had been the opposition party, excluded from power for a half-century, and most of that time by force, won the presidency. Is Taiwan unstable? The fact is that its system is based on legitimate and popularly approved constitutional structures, including checks and balances. No transition of the kind it has just undergone can be completely smooth, but democracy has made Taiwan much *more* stable and stronger than it was.

In Hong Kong, the obverse situation obtains. There, China ruled out full democracy as a replacement for British colonial rule in 1997, creating instead a jerry-built structure featuring limited elections to a powerless legislature and a chief executive appointed by Beijing at the top, with Hong Kong's highly competent and hitherto apolitical civil service in the middle. Beijing's purpose was to ensure "stability," but the result has been the opposite. The people and their legislators resent their inability to rule themselves; the chief executive worries about his plummeting popularity; and Beijing hamhandedly attempts to instruct the civil service and the Hong Kong people to obey. Beijing will soon have to make a choice: will this "Special Administrative Region" become a place of genuinely democratic self-rule, something of which the people of Hong Kong are certainly capable, or will it become a more open dictatorship, which would spell the beginning of the end of Hong Kong's golden age?

And what about China itself? If one were to speculate on what a democratically governed China would look like, one model that comes to mind is India, which has a national coalition sitting atop a whole series of local parties. In India, the exigencies of coalition-building act as a discipline on extremists. Farmers, who as in China form the majority of the population, are listened to, and their needs receive a great deal of attention. This means, among other things, that military expenditures are restricted. Because legitimacy comes from the grassroots, India's leaders travel abroad less than China's do and campaign more at home. There is absolutely no reason why China could not be as free and democratic and stable as India. It would be in China's every interest.

Of course, under democracy the non-Chinese areas of the country like Tibet and Xinjiang would probably want genuine autonomy or even independence, just as the non-Russian components of the USSR did when Communism ended there. (Although some have seen this as a disaster for Russia, my own view is that by letting Ukraine and Estonia and Kazakhstan go, Russia freed itself of the impossible task of suppressing them and at the same time created the conditions for genuine friendship.) As for the provinces that have always been Chinese, they, too, might want a degree of autonomy and a federalist constitution, but these peoples do consider themselves parts of a historic nation, and there is no reason to suppose that will change.

Sun Yat-sen once proposed a transitional period of tutelary government for the Chinese, during which new institutions would be installed and the people prepared for them. The Kuomintang always advocated such a system in words, and now, in Taiwan, it has been carried out completely in deed. It

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makes sense for China, too, where Communist ideology disallows the mention of parliamentary democracy even as a *long*-term goal.

Let me suggest a scenario. Visitors to China in the 1980's well remember the huge and utterly spontaneous farmers' markets that suddenly appeared in the countryside the moment trade was permitted by the authorities. These markets seemed to have everything on offer: not only chickens and pigs and produce but also fortune-tellers, barbers, dentists, and matchmakers, all arrayed and working smoothly without anyone's having given, or having been given, instructions.

Political reform does not work like that. Unlike markets, constitutional structures are not self-generating, and they do not grow spontaneously to meet needs. Nor, contrary to what many in the Clinton administration persist in imagining, does political change follow smoothly and inevitably on economic progress. Although the latter does indeed alter society, a transition to democracy can take place only if it has been painstakingly planned years in advance (as it was, for example, in Spain). The notion that a dictatorship can evolve gradually and slowly until a point where, as it were, it closes in on freedom, is fantasy.

What Beijing needs now is a consultative mechanism, bringing together the ablest and most respected people to plan a transition to democracy. In my dreams, I imagine that the reformers now being purged from the Academy of Social Sciences would instead be made advisers to the government, charged with drawing up a plan, like the plan drawn by the Qing dynasty almost a century ago, for a deliberate transition beginning at the local and provincial levels and then, without delay, at the national. At the same time, restrictions on press freedom would be lifted and civic groups and political parties allowed to form. (Such plans were in fact being made in the decade before the Tiananmen massacre.) Then, discussions could be held comparable to those in Taiwan in July 1990 when a committee convened by President Lee Teng-hui honorably retired the remaining members of the legislature who had been elected on the mainland in 1948, and prepared for new elections. In China, this would mean providing honorable exits for the millions of unelected cadres currently holding power, and in particular for the members of the various local, provincial, and national "people's congresses."

Is there reason to think the present Chinese regime is preparing anything remotely like what I have outlined? None whatsoever. Does that mean another decade or two of political winter? Frankly, I doubt it. The more likely scenario is one to which I have already alluded: a tear that begins, as it were, at the collar, with the central government becoming paralyzed by disagreements, followed either by a kind of free fall or possibly a military takeover.

To be sure, if China does deconstruct, one need not altogether give up hope for a democratic outcome, but it would occur piecemeal and over a much longer period of time. Although some parts of the country would be devastated by the collapse, and others would likely devolve into autonomous Communist states with their own dictators (like the current states of Central Asia), some could survive and prosper. Guangdong, for example, the single strongest and richest province in China, is now entirely self-sufficient. If you add its GDP to that of Hong Kong and Taiwan, you end up with a figure comparable to the GDP of the rest of China—and that figure is for only 80 million people, not for something over a billion. These 80 million are in effect citizens of three subsets of China that might be called "city-states," and that could conceivably serve as the nuclei for a democratically reorganized China.

BUT ALL that is in the realm of speculation, and perhaps overly hopeful speculation at that. Of far greater relevance today is the role being played by the United States—a role based more on assumptions than on facts and calculated to make things worse rather than better.

Today, in a headlong process that shows little sign of careful thought or prudence, we are well on the way to incorporating Communist China as a structural component of our own economic, political, and military security. We seem to be simultaneously betting on the current regime and recusing ourselves from any consideration of the crisis it will almost certainly face before long. So convinced are we of the wisdom of our approach that we make constant exceptions for Chinese behavior, most notably in the areas of human rights and nuclear nonproliferation, and we pressure our allies to do the same. Overestimating the stability of the Chinese regime, and underestimating the difficulties ahead, we have forgotten that our future in Asia depends less on our relations with China, whatever its complexion, than on how well we get along with our allies, the democratic states and free economies that share with us—and with democrats inside China itself—both values and interests.

China's transition from Communism is only just beginning, if it has begun at all. If we really mean this transition to go our way instead of spiraling into chaos or another dictatorship, we would do better to remember who we are and what we stand for, and act accordingly.

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Are Muslim Americans Victimized?

Daniel Pipes

EARLY THIS year, President Clinton publicly lamented the fact that Muslim Americans face "discrimination" and "intolerance" in this country. Not long afterward, the Senate passed a solemn resolution inveighing against the "discrimination and harassment" suffered by the American Muslim community.

Neither of these pronouncements happened by accident. Rather, they followed years of agitation and complaint on the part of organizations speaking on behalf of the several million Muslims living in the United States. These organizations are now bent on following the Senate resolution with a similar one by the House. To this end, the American Muslim Council (AMC) has invoked an "ongoing wave of discriminatory acts," while the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) states that "discrimination is now part of daily life for American Muslims." According to one member of the CAIR board, "Islamophobia," or the fear and hatred of Islam, is "at epidemic levels."

Is this true?

Ironically, evidence largely provided by the Muslim organizations themselves suggests a very different picture of Muslim-American life.

IN SOCIOECONOMIC terms, certainly, Muslims can find little fault with America. They boast among the highest rates of education of any group in the country—a whopping 52 percent appear to hold graduate degrees—and this translates into a pattern of prestigious and remunerative employment. Immigrant Muslims tend to concentrate in the professions (especially medicine and engineering) or in entrepreneurship, and their income appears to be higher than the U.S. national average; this year, median household income was said to be $69,000. Muslim magazines are replete with advertisements for luxurious mansions, stately cars, and fine jewelry, and more than a few Muslims have lived out the classic immigrant success story of rags to riches.

Business tycoons of note in the Muslim-American community include Bijan (high-end men's clothing), Rashid A. Chaudhry (personal care products), Ayhan Hakimoğlu (armaments), Yusef Haroon (consulting and managerial services), Mansoor Ijaz (investment management), Farooq Kathwari (furniture), Nemir Kirdar (venture capital), and Safi Qureshey (computers). The wealthiest Muslim American appears to be a software engineer of Turkish origins, Kenan Şahin, who in 1999 netted $1.45 billion when he sold his company, Kenan Systems, to Lucent Technologies. Muslim Americans proudly say that theirs is "the richest Muslim society on earth," and they are right.

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If Muslims are not oppressed economically, neither have they encountered many difficulties being accepted in the United States. Not only do Americans make persistent efforts to understand Islam, but, formally and informally, innumerable expressions of good will have come the way of the Muslim community.

On a government level, President George Bush in 1990 began the custom of congratulating Muslim Americans on the occasion of their holidays. A year later, Muslim men of faith were invited to inaugurate sessions of Congress with recitations from the Qur'an. President Clinton, the first lady, and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright have all hosted Muslim delegations to celebrate the breaking of the month-long fast of Ramadan. In 1997, the National Park Service installed a star and crescent on the White House Ellipse, alongside the national Christmas tree and a Hanukkah menorah.

The U.S. military has been similarly accommodating. In 1992, a military aircraft took 75 enlisted Muslim soldiers to Mecca for the pilgrimage, and in 1993 the Army commissioned its first Muslim chaplain. The armed forces provide *halal* meals (following Islamic dietary prescriptions) and do not require daily physical training during the Ramadan fast.

As for the media, they treat Islam and Muslims with a truly unique delicacy. The religion itself is portrayed only in positive terms. Articles explain the appeal of Islam (*Chicago Tribune*: "Searching Americans Embrace the Logic Behind the Teachings of Islam") and its spiritual rewards (*Orange County Register*: "In the Footsteps of the Prophets: A Pilgrimage to Mecca Defines a Couple's Faith and Marriage"). Newspapers regularly report the pleasure taken by Americans at the appearance of mosques in their communities, as well as the fact that, to the astonishment of immigrant Muslims, non-Muslims sometimes even donate funds for their construction. Ramadan inspires a blitz of coverage, with, for example, the *Los Angeles Times* running no fewer than seven major stories during the holiday season last year and virtually every other Los Angeles outlet following suit.

Sympathetic news reports show Muslims as good neighbors, as classic exemplars of the American dream, and as part of the fabric of American society. From the point of view of media coverage in the United States, one could hardly ask for better.

WHAT ABOUT the public expression of Islam? Here again the picture is a bright one.

Holidays. The Islamic festivals present two challenges. Based as they are on a lunar calendar, they move forward each (solar) year by about ten days, making it impossible to schedule a regular annual time for them. And while there are only a few main holidays, one of them, Ramadan, lasts a month, during which pious Muslims fast during the day and party at night.

These customs are not easily compatible with American work habits. And yet several corporations permit their Muslim staff to work a shortened day during Ramadan, and some also allow Muslim employees to take off the several weeks or even months required to make the full-scale pilgrimage to Mecca. Employers have proved somewhat less willing to give time off during the two Eids—the other major holidays in addition to Ramadan—but a number have acquiesced here, too. Several school districts, including New York City's, permit Muslim students to be absent on five Islamic holidays (New York also suspends its alternate-side-of-the-street parking rules); Paterson, New Jersey actually closes its schools for the Eids.

Prayers. Muslims are required to pray at five designated (but changing) times throughout the day. Although it is permissible to make up for one's devotions at a later hour, many Muslims insist on praying exactly on schedule. At the office or at school, this involves being excused for a period of time and finding a suitable venue. Considering that there are millions of Muslim Americans, remarkably few problems have arisen in this connection, and many of those involve factories where it is difficult to let employees be absent at times of their choosing.

Muslim plaintiffs have won substantial settlements against employers for prayer-related disputes. In Lincolnshire, Illinois, Mohammad Abdullah was fired for leaving his job at about noon on Fridays for prayer, even though he regularly arrived early to work or stayed late to compensate. After taking his case to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), he won a $49,000 settlement. In Jacksonville, Florida, Fareed Ansari won $105,216 from Ray's Plumbing Contractors, his former employer, on similar grounds.

Muslims have successfully sought accommodations for prayer from such employers as American Industries, Cleo, Larus Corporation, the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco, Minnesota Diversified Industries, Nu-kote International, the St. Paul, Minnesota school district, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Somali workers at National Electric Coil in Columbus, Ohio convinced their employer to grant them permission to take an hour-and-a-half lunch break, triple the usual allotment, to attend Friday after-

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noon prayer services outside the factory. In Columbia, Missouri a junior high school reached an agreement with the parents of fifteen Muslim students to permit prayer during school hours.

Similarly, when Muslims demand a *place* for prayer, corporations sometimes set aside an area, or at least give workers the right to roll out mats in a corner of the plant. Some workers have won rights to a floating break period designed to coincide with the ever-changing times of prayers, restroom facilities with floor-level sink basins for ablutions, and an on-site Qur'anic study group.

Beards. Wearing a beard has great symbolic importance for some Muslim men, being a means of emulating the Prophet Muhammad and signaling their membership in a pious community. They have frequently won the right to do so over an employer's initial objections. This was the case, for example, for Pakistani-born Mohammad Sajid, briefly dismissed as a dishwasher at a fast-food eatery in Sacramento but eventually reinstated. So, too, were Muslim males at such companies as Adirondack Transit Lines, Coca-Cola, Hilton Hotels, McDonald's, Safeway, and Taco Bell.

When a Muslim goes to court over this issue, he invariably wins. A Minnesota court ruled in favor of a fired Muslim who had refused to shave his beard. The EEOC found that United Parcel Service had discriminated against a beard-wearing Muslim in Illinois by refusing to promote him to a driver's position. And a federal appeals court in Newark, New Jersey, finding that the Newark police department's policy of prohibiting officers from wearing beards "violate[d] the First Amendment," awarded a Muslim policeman $25,000 in back wages.

Modesty. For Muslim women, the *hijab*, a cowl-like headscarf that covers the hair, serves as a sign of sexual reserve and a means of self-identification. American employers occasionally perceive it as mildly offensive or as an impediment to customer relations. In March 1999, five immigrant Muslim women sued a security firm at Dulles International Airport for requiring them to remove their scarves. The two sides settled out of court, with the women receiving written apologies, $750 in back pay, $2,500 in additional compensation, and a promise from the company to provide religious "sensitivity training" at all its U.S. locations.

Mindful of such precedents, many corporations—Bank of America, Bojangles' Restaurant, Boston Market, Cox Communications, Domino's Pizza, Kmart, Manpower Inc., McDonald's, Sheraton Hotels, the University of California at Berkeley, Taco Bell, and US Airways—have agreed to reconsider *hijab*-wearing female Muslim applicants who have been denied jobs or reinstate job-holders who have been let go. A number of companies have also agreed to provide "diversity training" to their staff. Having fired eleven Somali women at its car-rental outlet in the Atlanta airport for wearing ankle-length dresses, Hertz quickly reinstated them even though it said the long dresses had caused the women difficulties while getting in and out of cars.

ISSUES OF modesty have also arisen in schools, where students briefly, but only briefly, run afoul of dress codes. A Muslim girl attending high school in Fort Worth, Texas won permission to wear a *hijab* while playing soccer. High-school students in Williamsport, Pennsylvania gained the right to take their mandatory swimming instruction in private. A Muslim boy at the Lincoln Middle School in Gainesville, Florida was at first sent home because he would not tuck in his shirt but was then permitted to violate the school's dress code when his parents explained that untucked, loose-fitting shirts were more modest. A female applicant to the University of Health Sciences in Kansas City, Missouri was accepted as a medical student even though her request that she not be palpated by male colleagues disrupted the practice of having students learn by physically examining each other. And so forth.

Still other accommodations occur in the public square. Pennsylvania women may wear a headscarf when their pictures are taken for a driver's license. Muslim mothers in Alsip, Illinois may remain fully clothed as they watch their children at the pool. A particularly piquant case in Portsmouth, Virginia involved two Muslim women who were briefly detained for wearing full-face veils, thus allegedly violating an anti-Ku Klux Klan law prohibiting the wearing of masks in public. What the arresting officers did not know was that the law had been changed in 1991 specifically to *permit* the Muslim covering; for this momentary mistake, Portsmouth had to pay an astounding $100,000 to each woman. If the unscientific poll conducted by a local website can be relied on, the decision was a popular one, with a 2-to-1 majority agreeing that the women deserved compensation.

As we have seen, employees with grievances can make out fabulously well in court, an exercise in which they often find themselves benefiting from the pro-bono services of non-Muslim lawyers or money from nonsectarian institutions like the Becket Fund. Lule Said, a Somali immigrant, was working in 1991 as a guard for Northeast Security

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of Brookline, Massachusetts when a co-worker complained about his origins and faith, announced that he hated Muslims, wiped his feet on Said's prayer rug and kicked it aside, and threatened him. When Said complained to his supervisor, he was told to stop praying or lose his job. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination awarded him $300,000—about a decade's salary—and chewed out Northeast Security. Ahmad Abu-Aziz, an immigrant from Jordan, complained of discrimination from the start of his employment with United Air Lines in 1994. Ignored by his supervisor, then terminated for supposed misconduct, he went to court: a jury awarded him $2.9 million in damages, a sum sustained by the appellate court.

WHATEVER COMPLAINTS Muslims may have about life in America, then, they cannot legitimately complain about a lack of receptivity to those complaints. Indeed, the effort to accommodate Muslim sensibilities extends well beyond issues of legal and employment rights.

Thus, public figures who issue statements perceived as inimical to Islam are usually induced to make amends right away, sometimes under pressure from non-Muslims as well as Muslims. This can go to extreme lengths: when, earlier this year, Republican Congressman James Rogan refused to meet with one Muslim leader, Salam Al-Marayati, on the altogether correct grounds that Al-Marayati "seem[ed] to be an apologist for Muslim terrorists," Jewish and Christian organizations rushed to Al-Marayati's defense and were instrumental in prompting Rogan to express his regrets.

The same readiness to recant obtains when the media offend Muslims or commit factual errors. Jay Leno of NBC's *Tonight* retracted a seemingly inoffensive comedy sketch about an imaginary amusement park in Iran and promised to be "more diligent in the future." Martin Goldsmith, host of National Public Radio's *Performance Today*, offered "sincere apologies" for having related a legend about the sexual powers of the prophet Muhammad, and thanked his listeners for making their concerns known. Paul Harvey, possibly the most listened-to radio broadcaster in America, called Islam a "fraudulent religion" but quickly retracted this "unintentional slur" and apologized on air for having "understandably offended" Muslims.

Book publishers go farther, actually recalling books at considerable expense to themselves. Simon & Schuster withdrew a children's book, *Great Lives: World Religions*, after being made aware of its negative treatment of the prophet Muhammad. *Muslim Holidays* by Faith Winchester was pulped simply for showing pictures of Muhammad, for transliterating the name of a holiday in a nonstandard manner, and for repeating some odd folk tales. How many books normally get destroyed for such misdemeanors?

Schools are especially sensitive. When a professor at Southern Connecticut State University allegedly gave an anti-Islamic tract to a student, the university reacted by instituting educational seminars on Islam. A high-school teacher in Rochester, Minnesota was reassigned for expressing dislike of Muslim modesty practices; in the words of a school official, "one [more] misstep and she's gone." A New Jersey professor who said "goddamn Muslims" in front of a class was reportedly out of a job.

On the Internet, Muslims are protected from the sorts of things that are routinely said about blacks or Jews. AT&T WorldNet Service removed a site that defamed the prophet Muhammad as a "rapist" and as worse than Hitler. GeoCities took down a website that called Islam "a threat to the whole world." America Online closed down a site that published pseudo-Qur'anic verses, on the grounds that it was "clearly designed to be hurtful and defamatory."

In the business world, advertisements that take Islam lightly are withdrawn with alacrity. Total Sports, Inc. canceled an ad showing a group of Muslims "praying" to a basketball. Burger King pulled a commercial in which a character bearing a Muslim name praised the restaurant's bacon-laden (and thus non-*halal*) Whopper sandwich. A radio commercial by the Colorado lottery that began, "You've heard the old expression about the mountain coming to Muhammad?," was withdrawn on the grounds that Islam forbids gambling. Because of Muslim objections, the *Los Angeles Times* dropped an innocuous promotion campaign contrasting two types of female readers: bikini-clad and chador-clad. Other companies—including Anheuser-Busch, DoubleTree Hotels, MasterCard International, Miller Brewing Company, Seagrams, and Timeslips Corporation—have done likewise.

The use of Arabic script for decorative purposes often provokes complaint, and corporations respond quickly. Warehouse One withdrew a women's shirt bearing Arabic script from the Qur'an on the front and sleeves. In a similar incident, Liz Claiborne discontinued the use of Arabic lettering and issued an abject apology. When CAIR contended that the logo on a Nike basketball shoe could "be interpreted" as the word *Allah* (God) in Arabic script, Nike, although denying any such intent, withdrew the shoe, introduced changes in its design shop, and

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produced educational CD's and videos about Islam. The company also agreed to sponsor events in the Muslim community, to donate Nike products to Islamic charitable groups, and to pay for sports facilities at several Islamic schools. The first payment was $50,000 for the Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center in northern Virginia.

THIS IS not to deny that some degree of bias against Muslims does exist in the United States. But no immigrant community or non-Protestant religious group wholly escapes such prejudice. Buddhists and Hindus, adherents of religions yet more alien than Islam to most Americans, also face bias and are subjected to ridicule.

More importantly, bias against Muslims is contained, illegal, and of relatively little import. Linda S. Walbridge, an anthropologist who has immersed herself in the American Muslim community, offers a useful comparison with anti-Catholic sentiment. It, too, she writes, "has not disappeared from America, but it is at a low enough level that it certainly does not hinder Catholics from participating in all spheres of activity. There is no reason to think," Walbridge adds, that Muslims "will experience anything much different." Whatever adjustment may still be needed to accommodate a new and alien faith, the record shows an impressive flexibility on the part of American institutions, public and private, both to acknowledge Islam and to oblige individual Muslims.

Are ordinary Muslim Americans (as opposed to their organizational spokesmen) aware of their good fortune? A mid-1980's survey suggests that they are. According to its summary statement:

> No Muslim interviewed reported that he or she had ever experienced any personal harassment in the workplace or knew of any experienced by a friend or associate as a result of being either Muslim or foreign-born. Nor did any of those interviewed report any problems in buying or renting homes or apartments as a result of perceived prejudice.

In an early 1990's poll, young Muslim women "denied they were oppressed in any way in the United States," while an AMC poll this year found 66 percent agreeing with the assertion that "U.S. society currently shows a respect toward the Muslim faith."

Individual Muslims concur. "Our life in this county has been terrific and we love it," an immigrant to Virginia told the *Washington Post*, while Fereydun Hoveyda, a former Iranian official now living in New York, finds that in the United States "there is no animosity at all to Islam." Even Ibrahim Hooper of CAIR, perhaps the single most vocal complainer about "Islamophobia," has acknowledged that "domestic policy toward the Muslim community is quite good." Khaled Saffuri of the Islamic Institute goes further, conceding that in the United States "there is relatively speaking a better degree of freedom compared to many Muslim countries."

If one were to speculate about the reasons for this happy circumstance, two explanations spring to mind. One is American openness to the immigrant and the exotic, combined with a historic disposition to offer a level playing field to all. The other is a genuine multiculturalism—not the specious doctrine of racial and ethnic "diversity" imposed so successfully on American institutions, but a sincere willingness to accept and learn from other civilizations. Other factors play a part as well, including the growth of the regulatory arm of government and especially its readiness to dictate workplace rules. Muslim Americans have been quick to avail themselves of these benefits, as is, of course, their right.

It is also the right of CAIR, AMC, and the Muslim Public Affairs Council to devote their resources to promoting the idea of Muslim victimization. But the reality is, stubbornly, otherwise: far from being victimized, the Muslim-American community is robust and advancing steadily. For non-Muslim Americans, at least, the lesson should be clear: even as they continue to welcome active Muslim participation in American life, there is no reason to fall for, let alone to endorse, spurious charges of "discrimination and harassment."

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My Jewish Childhood

Dan Jacobson

THERE IS an ironic contrast between the way we think about adulthood when we are children and how we look back on childhood once we have become adults. As children, we cannot wait to leave the state of subordination in which we are trapped, whether at school or at home. Out there are the grownups who do important work, go to bed when they like, spend money, have sex, drive cars; and here we are, dependent on them, subject to their orders, knowing we cannot cope without them—in short, living through what the poet W.B. Yeats, in one of his great phrases, referred to as "the ignominy of boyhood."

And when we become adults? Even those not in thrall to the doctrines of psychoanalysis are likely to think that the experiences that ultimately shaped their consciousness took place during childhood. It was then that we perceived everything with an unparalleled sharpness and sensitivity, and that our emotional lives had an immediacy seldom matched subsequently. In those respects, at least, most of what followed has been a falling-off.

Perhaps writers or writers-to-be are particularly prone to reaching forward in childhood to the unrealized future and then, in adulthood, looking back with longing or blame on the receding past. And perhaps that is why the memoir or short story or poem may be more appropriate to the topic of growing up than the analytic or discursive mode. Imaginative writing is at home with confusion and multifariousness and the absence of clearly defined "borders." Discursive writing, by contrast, whether on the topic of childhood or any other, seems to impel one toward categorizing and generalizing, toward lining up strengths and weaknesses, good things and bad, credits and debits, in neat, bookkeeping columns. But no aspect of our lives is really separable from any other, and almost any experience can be seen in retrospect as one of both gain and loss. All this is further complicated by the fact that growing up Jewish—which is my particular subject here—is just one way of growing up anything, of going through the universal experience of being a child and then, at no definable moment, ceasing to be one.

So, before proceeding in the most direct and categorical fashion—by dividing into good and bad the experience of growing up Jewish in South Africa—I must insist that these categories are being set up in order to be disrupted or even destroyed. I am also acutely aware that the childhood I am

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about to describe took place a long time ago—in the late 30's and 40's of the last century—and in a setting—the isolated, declining mining town of Kimberley that then had a Jewish community of about 130 families—that was "atypical" even by South African standards. Whether that strengthens or weakens the historical interest and present relevance of what follows must be left for others to decide.

Among the good things I associate with having grown up Jewish in that place and at that time, the first must surely be the strength of feeling within the family about the family—as an institution and as a fixed framework for our lives. This feeling was conveyed by my parents and I believe by most other Jewish parents in town to their children. As it happens, my own father and mother did not get along particularly well with one another, and they themselves had both come from homes that had been disrupted in different ways—even apart from the great upheaval of their migration at an early age from (in my father's case) Latvia and (in my mother's) Lithuania. Yet none of their children ever doubted the strength of their commitment to us or the depth of responsibility they felt toward us.

This was made manifest not by way of explicit declarations or programmatic and sentimental appeals, but by what I would call their very opposite: gestures, tone of voices, facial expressions, assumptions unwittingly made, hopes and expectations left unspoken. By such means, too, I seem always to have been made aware (though from what age and in what terms it is impossible for me to say) that my parents' feelings about their children were inextricably associated in their minds with the vulnerability and fragility of their position as Jews and immigrants, and that what was true of them applied in varying degrees to most other members of the community.

Obviously I am not suggesting that only immigrant Jewish parents gave a high priority to the welfare of their children and felt their responsibility toward them so keenly. What I have in mind, rather, is the style or manner of their caring, and the powerful undercurrents that ran within it. These were also made manifest in another aspect of my parents' lives into which and out of which their Jewishness flowed: their intellectual curiosity. Though my father was the manager of a butter factory and my mother worked in the firm as an accountant, they were bookish by temperament. They read. Their tastes differed—my mother was given to reading novels and biographies and my father books on current affairs—but their reading was important to both of them and they talked to us as well as to each other about what they were reading and the ideas it suggested to them.

One consequence of growing up in such a household was that from an early age the children became readers, too, and generally did well in school. So did a disproportionate number of the other Jewish children—a fact that one or two unpleasant teachers in the Kimberley Boys High School did not fail to point out to those among us who were not high achievers. To tell the truth, at such moments I was never sure to whom these teachers felt more hostile: the boys who fulfilled the stereotype of Jewish "cleverness" or the ones who failed to do so.

The next benefit I would enter on the list is the sense of kinship, or at least of commonality, shared by the Jewish families in Kimberley. Almost all of them were of Lithuanian or Latvian origin like my parents and indeed like the overwhelming majority of South African Jewry. Almost all of them were also relatively recent arrivals in the country, or the children of new arrivals. Since the community was so small, I imagine its members all knew one another by sight and name. The organized nature of community life gave both adults and children regular opportunities to pursue the usual kinds of collective activities: synagogue worship and the administrative business involved in running the synagogue, Hebrew lessons for the youngsters, Zionist meetings addressed by fundraisers from abroad or from the big cities of Johannesburg and Cape Town, women's gatherings, weddings, bar mitzvahs, the burial society, a Young Israel society, and so forth. As children, in short, we were provided with what could be called a ready-made milieu which, though it did not satisfy all our social needs and aspirations, nevertheless gave us many of our friends and much of our entertainment, and helped us in a variety of ways to acquire a sense of what we might make of ourselves.

Related to all this was our consciousness that being Jewish involved us not just with the local community in Kimberley, and with other communities in South Africa, but with Jewry everywhere. During my boyhood the Jewish world was undergoing a catastrophe of proportions unlike anything even in its long history. The full extent of this catastrophe was, perhaps fortunately, not known to us; but we were aware that terrible, unspeakable events were taking place in Europe, and that these not only affected us morally and psychologically but threatened our physical existence as well.

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I will say more about this on the debit side, but I hope it will not seem crass if I add here, as a most heavily qualified "credit" of a kind, that as children we learned that through our Jewishness we had a direct stake in world-shaking events. For us to have found ourselves in a small town in South Africa was not the random happening it might have appeared, but was part of a history of dispersion and suffering that had been going on for many centuries and might well go on for as many more. As Jews we may have been newly arrived at the foot of the African continent, but we were not newly arrived in the world. In fact, we had been here long before almost any other group anywhere that could make a plausible show of possessing a continuous, historic identity.

The Zionist movement—in which, perhaps because of the racially riven nature of the country itself, the South African Jewish community took a proportionately stronger and more active interest than any other in the Western world—had something of the same impact. It incited us to believe that we were intimately involved in struggles which, however physically distant, could well affect our own futures. (Not that World War II was physically distant for many young men of the town, my older brother among them, who served in the South African forces in North Africa and Italy.)

IN ALLUDING to this "international" dimension of growing up Jewish I must also mention another worldwide phenomenon from which many South Africans in general—and not only those of British stock—derived a strengthened sense of identity and self-importance. I mean the British empire and commonwealth, to which the entire country had been forcibly attached after the defeat of the two independent Boer republics in the 1899–1902 Anglo-Boer war. People who lived "under the British crown" in those days could think of themselves as belonging to, as part of, a political system that exercised global power and was held in global esteem. However insignificant they were within that system, they had some kind of obscure claim for consideration not just wherever they happened to be, but elsewhere too: in Canada and Australia, in Malaya and India, as well as in the so-called "mother country" itself. The crown, the coinage, the buff postal envelopes marked "On His Majesty's Service," the playing of "God Save the King" at the end of movies, some of the history we studied in school, some of the films we watched (like the ardently imperialist *Rhodes of Africa* or *Lives of a Bengal Lancer*)—all this, politically incorrect though it is to say so today, was a source of an enlarged sense of selfhood, even for those who could at best claim to be stepchildren of the empire.

As evidence of this I might point, for example, to the biography of Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist statesman and first president of Israel, born and brought up in Eastern Europe and a passionate admirer of Britain and what he believed to be its imperial mission, or to the memoirs of major figures in the Indian struggle for independence like Gandhi or Nehru. Even more relevant are the echoes of such sentiments I can remember hearing from those who, on the face of it, should have rejected them outright, like members of the large Cape Coloured community in Kimberley, and from blacks as well as resentful, republican-minded Afrikaners. Among the blacks I should particularly mention Sol Plaatje, my fellow-Kimberleyite, translator of Shakespeare into the Tswana language and founder of the African National Congress, who repeatedly and unavailingly turned to London to intercede on behalf of his people against the "colonial" whites.*

For Jews, the imperial connection had a peculiar importance for two further reasons. First, South Africa's constitutional status as a self-governing British dominion within the commonwealth made it seem "natural" that the country should have entered World War II against Germany on Britain's side (even if the vote in South Africa's parliament was a damned close-run thing, as the Duke of Wellington said about his victory at Waterloo). Second, Great Britain was the mandatory power in Palestine, where the struggle for the establishment of an independent Jewish state was then gradually coming to its crisis.

A FINAL item on the credit side: growing up Jewish, I believe, encouraged many of us to feel a quasi-instinctive sympathy with other despised and unjustly treated racial groups in South Africa, and a distaste, to put it no more strongly, for the way they were habitually spoken to and spoken of by most whites in those days. Long before the Afrikaner Nationalists (who came to power in 1948) were to introduce their elaborate, ideologically driven apartheid policies, a fierce color bar affected every aspect of social, political, economic, and educational life all over the country. In their overwhelming majority, the members of the Jewish community accepted this dispensation and lived by

* Plaatje was also, incidentally, the first man to make a recording (in London, in 1920) of *Inkosi Sikulele Afrika*, which is today the South African national anthem.

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it. Yet I can say of the Jewish boys at my school, who came in all sizes, shapes, and dispositions, that I never heard them using the violent and abusive language against people of darker skin that was common coin among many (though by no means all) of our non-Jewish schoolfellows. Nor did I hear Jewish boys boasting of what they or their fathers or their uncles had done to this or that unfortunate black servant or urchin or passer-by who had been (in the odious phrase of the time) "cheeky."

This may not sound like much in today's climate, but it was something. I know, too, that the view my parents took of the voteless, rightless, poverty-stricken majority of people around us was explicitly derived by them from their own past and their feelings about that past (the past, that is, of their own lives and the life of their people). Currently there is much discussion within the South African Jewish community about how pusillanimous or otherwise the Jews were vis-à-vis the injustices perpetrated against other groups in the country, especially during the apartheid years. Some of what I will be saying has a bearing on the prehistory of that debate, raising the question of how secure politically, socially, and even physically the Jews felt themselves to be at the time I am speaking of here—which is roughly between the years leading up to the outbreak of war in 1939 and the crucial electoral victory of the Afrikaner Nationalist party nine years later.

I turn now to the debit side of this exceptionally messy balance sheet. And I begin with a statement of the obvious. Black or white, the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa espoused and continue to espouse varying forms of Christianity. The languages they speak, the calendar they follow, the customs they observe and most of their musical, literary, and pictorial modes of expression are all steeped in, or dependent on, Christian beliefs and assumptions. It would be improper, and pointless, for any non-Christian minority to feel aggrieved on that score.

Next, as long as the people of South Africa (or anywhere else) are divided into ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups—and I cannot imagine them *not* so divided—there will always be tensions and animosities among them. It is always going to be difficult to get socially and racially diverse peoples to live harmoniously together within a single polity. No talk of rainbow coalitions, or (in South Africa's case) of a Rainbow Nation, is going to change this state of affairs.

Finally, in speaking as bleakly as I am going to do about the anti-Semitism I grew up with, I do not want to suggest that it was universal. Far from it.

Still, the fact remains that the heaviest item on the debit side of my experience of growing up Jewish, the bad thing that probably embraces all others, was the anti-Semitism—of a virulent kind and of epidemic proportions—that was abroad during my boyhood. If the sentiment, the passion, and the ideology of anti-Semitism—and it was all these—never actually became murderous in South Africa itself, that was as much a matter of luck as of any imperviousness to it within the society's own institutions. By "luck," I mean that the British did not surrender to Nazi Germany at the time of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain. If that had happened, one can only speculate about the fate of the community, especially given the undisguised longing for a German victory expressed by the official Afrikaner Nationalist movement—not to speak of such now-forgotten but once actively and vociferously pro-Nazi outriders to it like the Ossewa Brandwag, the New Order, and the Greyshirts.

By the early 1940's Nazism was at its peak. It seemed all-conquering. The Nazis had spread their poison worldwide, and we know from documents discovered after the war that they regarded South Africa as a territory particularly ripe for the harvesting. This was the climate in which we conducted our lives; and, just like Jews living in countries much closer to the Nazi armies than we were, we carried on by and large just as if everything were normal and would continue that way. So, fortunately for us, did most of our non-Jewish neighbors. But the prevailing climate affected not only those who were openly or covertly pro-German. The Nazis had not invented anti-Semitism, and their version of it was so successful because in large part it merged with attitudes and beliefs that were ancient, insidious, and yet somehow casual; that were taken for granted yet held with great tenacity and an ebullient self-righteousness by all and sundry.

Well, sundry anyway: businessmen, teachers, clergymen, directors of the De Beers Consolidated Mines, boys at school, parents who discouraged their offspring from playing with Jewish children, newspaper editors who wrote offensively about the Jews. They were not Nazis, but they were anti-Semites, whether they were conscious of being so or not; and emboldened by the climate of the time, they made their presence felt in all sorts of ways.

Let me give just a single instance of the willingness to wound Jewish feelings I am speaking about here, and which helped to determine and to

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darken my own feelings both about being Jewish and about the society at large. From roughly the fourth through the eighth grade (that is, between the ages of nine and thirteen), not a school year passed without one of our prescribed literary texts including a prominent Jewish figure whose unpleasantness was made central to his Jewishness by the writer himself. We had a child's version of Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, with its crawling, money-crazed Isaac of York; we had Baroness D'Orczy's *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, which contains at least one chapter featuring a miserly and treacherous Jew; we had an Afrikaans novel with a name I have forgotten but which I remember to have been similarly adorned; and finally we were given Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, best-known perhaps for its portrait of the unforgettably villainous Fagin, which we studied exhaustively over two years. The choice of such a succession of books at that particular historical moment, whether deliberate or not, says much about the unspoken attitudes of the officials of the Cape Province department of education. (True, we later escaped *The Merchant of Venice*, but only because *Hamlet* was the alternative Shakespeare text on offer for that year's examination.)

In the eyes of most white South Africans, Jews occupied the lowest rung of esteem and social acceptability among whites. Not the lowest rung professionally or economically—that was reserved for the "poor whites." But the very fact that I can compare the poor whites with a group whose menfolk were mostly shopkeepers and professional people, and which aspired earnestly to a middle-class way of life, illustrates just how anomalous and indeed oppressive was the situation in which the Jews found themselves. The word "oppressive" will no doubt look provocative to some eyes, in view of the many other, more radical forms of racial oppression and dispossession that were rife in South Africa during my childhood. But when I look back on what it was like to be a Jewish ten-year-old in a small South African town 60 years ago, I have no inclination to use any other term at this point.

Now add together the following: the inevitable marginalization of Jews in a largely Christian country; the readiness to speak and think ill of Jews that was then so widespread in society as a whole; the insanely paranoid and ideological anti-Semitism being spread by what was then the strongest military power in the world; and, last but not least, the constant interaction and interchange among all these levels of attitude and belief. Take all this into account and think about its effects on the minds and sensibilities of ten-year-old youngsters who are at the wrong end of it, and what is one likely to one find? The answer is plain enough. Self-division, self-doubt, self-rejection, anxiety, weariness, conflicting loyalties, envy, shame, a longing to be shut of the whole business.

None of this should come as a shock or a surprise to anyone. Jews have been saying for centuries that it is hard to be a Jew, and a vulnerability to the moral and psychological pressures I have just named is one of the hardships they have faced ever since they began to seek acceptance by the larger societies within which they lived or toward which they migrated. These pressures were and to some degree still are a source of great pain; they are also at the heart of much Jewish humor; they are at work behind and within Jewish ambition and creativity in a variety of fields, literature not least among them. (As a not-so-tiny example of the tortuosities of consciousness I am trying to describe, let me say that my early, humiliating acquaintance with *Oliver Twist* was the beginning of a lifelong addiction to the novels of Charles Dickens.)

Of course, not even the most self-hating Jew believes that all Gentiles lead happy and unproblematical lives, or that he himself would do likewise if only he were released from servitude to his Jewishness. But anyone who has been the object of racial hatred knows that it is so wounding to its victim—more wounding than personal abuse directed against him as an individual—precisely because it denies his individuality. To every member of the spurned race it says: to me you will never be a person with a life and interests of your own, but always a representative of a species. Whatever you do will reveal only your speciesdom; and if you try to escape from it, that too will reveal the species you belong to.

READERS WERE warned that some good things and bad things were likely to change places as my argument proceeded, and I have been depressingly as good as my word. I know that for many people who have grown up Jewish, one of the good things about it, indeed the best thing, is Judaism itself; and such readers may be wondering why I have not mentioned the consolations the religion offers to those who are faithful to it. This is a serious question and it demands a serious reply. I have not mentioned the consolations of religion because I never felt them.

Some of the rituals and observances of the Jewish festivals had a limited aesthetic appeal to me as a boy—those that took place in the home (like the table laid for the Passover seder) more than those in Kimberley's only synagogue, where services were

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conducted in a strictly traditional manner. But as far back as I can remember, these observances were vitiated for me by my inability to accept the beliefs and teachings to which they owed their existence. I have no doubt that the dismal states of mind I itemized above would be felt less keenly by a believing Jew. Perhaps they would not be felt at all. But this fact can hardly affect my own position. To someone like myself, belief adopted for instrumental or therapeutic reasons, rather than out of genuine conviction, is bound to appear contrived: a complication of the problem, so to speak, rather than a solution to it.

To have grown up secular, as in effect I did—with the active encouragement of my mother and the compliance of my father, whose deep feelings about his people were manifested in his almost obsessive identification with the Zionist cause—was quite a common way of growing up Jewish in my youth. And for people of that generation it was a common way of staying Jewish, too, in the sense of retaining a strong interest in Jewish life both in Israel and in the Diaspora, as my own career as a writer and that of many of my contemporaries in other fields would attest. Today it appears that just as more and more Jews are marrying "out," so too more of them—though a much smaller number than the first group—are returning to the religion of their forefathers. In my time and place the choice of the latter option was rare indeed. Of the boys who grew up with me I can only think of one who later became truly observant; and even he had squared the circle by marrying a Gentile woman who then converted to Judaism.

In South Africa today the salient fact about the Jews is that their numbers have now shrunk to about half of what they were 50 years ago (an estimated 75,000 in all). Assimilation and a strikingly low birth rate have contributed to this depletion, but not as much as the constant hemorrhage of emigration. During the apartheid years Jews were inclined to leave because of their conviction that the racial policies of the Nationalist government would sooner or later reduce the country to social and political ruin; now the incidence of violent crime and the specter of AIDS continue to drive them away, as does their lack of confidence in the capacity of the country's new rulers to avoid the administrative failures (and worse) that disfigure so many other independent black states to the north.

Much of what I have written here about my boyhood in South Africa may sound excessively gloomy: a going-back over old, unhappy things. But history never ceases to surprise us, and not a few of the surprises that have come our way during the past 50 years—that is, from the time I crossed the line between adolescence and adulthood—have been more encouraging than anyone had a right to expect.

My conviction about anti-Semitism, for instance, is that though the sentiment has not disappeared, and probably never will, as a political force it is now largely spent. Rash though it may seem to say so, I suspect that anti-Semites themselves—even in Russia!—doubt that their creed will ever again serve as the central inspiration of a mass movement that will carry them to the power they crave. There are many reasons for this, among them social and demographic changes on a global scale that have nothing to do with the Jews as such. But among those reasons, surely, is the existence of the state of Israel, which has done away with what, in my view, never failed to provoke the anti-Semites to their excesses—not, as they always liked to claim, the power of the Jews, but its very opposite, the helplessness of the Jews, which fed the sadistic conviction of their enemies that this particular people could be driven and hunted from place to place, and killed outright when circumstances were propitious, because no country in the world would regard it as its prime task to give them protection.

Those days are over. They are no more going to return than a biologically based doctrine of white supremacy is going to return to power in South Africa, or Marxism in the now nonexistent Soviet Union. For all this, at the beginning of a new century, we have reason to be grateful.

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Observations

Giuliani and After

Dan Seligman

Now approaching his eighth and final year in office, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani suddenly seems an enigma. What is one to make of a politician who defined himself by means of a combative, no-nonsense toughness, accomplishing miracles in the process, and has now begun redefining himself as Mr. Compassion? Is the change substantive or merely stylistic? Is it driven, as the mayor himself has suggested, solely by the private misfortunes—a diagnosis of prostate cancer, a collapsed second marriage—that also led to his withdrawal from a run for the U.S. Senate, or might it also be viewed as a tacit surrender to the Sharpton-Sulzberger axis (to coin a phrase)?

To lend credence to the latter possibility, Giuliani has been dogged throughout his administration by the kind of racial demagoguery personified by the Rev. Al Sharpton, and also by the inescapably liberal take on the city's priorities espoused by the *New York Times* and its current publisher, Arthur O. Sulzberger, Jr. Until very recently, he seemed essentially disdainful of their joint and several criticisms. But they may have come to seem more formidable when, only a year after the unfortunate shooting of an unarmed illegal immigrant named Amadou Diallo by four police officers, another city policeman killed another minority-group member this past spring and Giuliani found himself assailed yet again for not having "reached out" to the slain man's family.

But all this also raises the ultimate question about Giuliani's tenure in office: how much of what he has accomplished will, in fact, endure?

In three dimensions of city life, Giuliani's accomplishments have been truly extraordinary. Perhaps best known are the crime figures. When he was elected mayor in 1993, New York had the twelfth highest rate of violent crime among American cities with populations over 250,000. As of this August, violent crime in New York had tumbled in all categories: murders were down by 65 percent since Giuliani took office, robberies by 58 percent, assaults by 37 percent, rapes by 35 percent, shootings by 66 percent. Of course crime has been falling all across the country; but FBI data—which now rate New York the safest large city in the U.S.—make it clear that Giuliani has done much more than participate in a national trend.

A second area has to do with taxes. When Giuliani took office, the burden on city residents was terrible. It is still terrible—but significantly less so thanks to several of his initiatives. One was to cut the tax on commercial rents (in effect a rent increase on top of the city's already hefty charges); another was to cut the unincorporated-business tax, which requires self-employed individuals, including writers like me, to pay both the ordinary city income tax and an additional percentage on the same income. Together, these two taxes had kept many thousands of people from moving to or doing business in the city.

Under Giuliani, too, a 12.5-percent income-tax surcharge was permitted to expire, and another sur-

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charge may also be eliminated (unless the City Council blocks that move). All told, his team can be given credit for reducing the city's tax burden for the year 2000 by close to $2 billion. Although, according to the Independent Budget Office, New York today is still by far the most heavily taxed large city in the U.S., without Giuliani's efforts the bite would be much, much worse.

Most important of all are changes in the "feel" of city life—changes that in some measure have been spinoffs from the lower crime rates but that also go well beyond them and are much harder to quantify. An apt summary of these changes appears in one of the two extraordinarily revealing biographies of Giuliani that have been published in the last few months. Here is Andrew Kirtzman in *Rudy Giuliani: Emperor of the City*:*

> It is hard to overstate the degree to which the culture of the city changed under his mayoralty. New Yorkers heading for work no longer encounter men urinating on the sidewalks. They no longer travel in graffiti-covered [subway] trains, in which homeless men sleep across the seats and peddlers loudly hawk ragged copies of *Street News*. They don't fear for their safety as they exit onto deserted streets. The parked cars they pass no longer sport signs addressed to car thieves taped to their windows reading "No Radio," and old ladies in the park no longer talk exclusively about who's been mugged over the weekend. The porn stores have vanished from neighborhoods, and drug dealers no longer sell loose joints in children's parks.

So much for the credit side of the ledger. But the debit side is on no less abundant display in the two new books, and decisively so in the second, Wayne Barrett's *Rudy!*, labeled an "investigative biography."† Indeed, one crucial difference between these authors is their level of fairness. Kirtzman, a television journalist, adds his share of warts but generally renders the details of his story matter-of-factly, with a minimum of editorializing, and, as in the passage quoted above, he also credits the mayor with transforming life in New York. By contrast, Barrett, a veteran political reporter at the *Village Voice*, makes no pretense of objectivity. He comes out swinging, never stops, and is almost laughably unfair—even going so far as to argue that the huge crime reductions owe nothing to initiatives put in place during the Giuliani administration.

DESPITE HIS unabashed prosecutorial zeal, though, Barrett has produced the more interesting book, and one that has the virtue, unlike Kirtzman's, of dealing with the whole of Giuliani's life. Barrett has clearly talked at length with all sorts of people who have known the mayor: teachers, law-school professors, individuals close to the federal judge for whom he clerked, friends and girlfriends when he was in private practice at a New York law firm and again during his stint in the Reagan Justice Department where he rose to be associate attorney general and U.S. attorney for the Southern District, and finally friends and enemies at the time of his failed 1989 run for the mayor's office and during his mayoral years starting in early 1994. Barrett is also capable of getting unexpected mileage out of obscure public records, for example by unearthing the fascinating if somewhat puzzling fact that in high school Giuliani scored only 569 on his verbal SAT's and only 504 in math—figures that seem far too low for a young man who in only a few years would be impressing just about everybody he met and, with no real money or connections, rising like a rocket.

Barrett's spongelike interviewing methods yield a number of eye-popping details about criminality in Giuliani's family background. One such detail that has received extensive coverage is the prison record of his father, Harold Giuliani, who spent a year and four months in Sing-Sing after an armed robbery in 1934.

But there is much more to the story, beginning with the fact that Harold was obviously a tough guy who had a fling at a boxing career and later was a strong-arm man for his brother-in-law, Leo D'Avanzo. The latter ran a bar and restaurant in the Ebbets Field neighborhood in Brooklyn that was also the center of a loan-sharking operation. Leo's son, Lewis, Giuliani's cousin and schoolmate, likewise had a high-flying criminal career that culminated in a huge auto-theft ring. (Plainly mob-connected, Lewis was killed when FBI agents stopped his car and he tried to run them over.) Another prominent figure in Leo's bar was Lou Carbonetti, apparently Harold Giuliani's best friend and a private secretary to Judge Thomas Aurelio, once caught on tape thanking the mobster Frank Costello for his appointment to the bench.

How did Giuliani make his way from this rather unpromising environment to a career in the Justice Department and as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York? It is true that there were also some police officers in his family, including a cousin, a genuine "hero cop," who was shot to death while trying to pacify a crazed gunman. It is also true that Harold Giuliani made a point of keeping his son away from the dangerous D'Avanzos. Even so, the young Giuliani's background included many bad guys, and one might think he deserves special credit for growing up to be a prosecutor who put away mafiosi.

This, naturally, is not the moral reached by Barrett. Instead, he derides the mayor for admiring his "hard-working" father and adds, in a truly nasty rhetorical flourish: "How did New York's champion of chastity manage to so deftly emboss

* Morrow, 333 pp., $25.00.
† Basic, 498 pp., $26.00.

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his past, to sweep such broad, wholesome strokes across it all?" What, one wants to ask, was Giuliani supposed to do—denounce his family?

ONE MYSTERY about Rudolph Giuliani concerns the depth of his political convictions. Both books remind us that, in 1989, he initially expected to be running on the Republican line against the then-incumbent Mayor Edward I. Koch, a moderately conservative Democrat, and accordingly positioned himself as a liberal/moderate uttering ritual pieties about the plight of the homeless. But then, finding himself instead up against the left-wing David Dinkins, who had beaten Koch in the primaries, he redefined himself as an enemy of the city's sick liberalism and took to this new assignment with alacrity. In 1993, when he won the mayoralty, he was plainly a conservative.

Upon assuming office, Giuliani made it clear that he seriously intended not only to challenge the bedrock assumptions of victimological liberalism but to do something about them. His first year at City Hall featured an audacious call for huge cuts in city social services and the jobs that went with them. Giuliani proposed to eliminate 15,000 jobs, and ultimately got 14,000 of them. (Spitting in the eye of the opposition, he exempted the police and firefighters.) He also moved to deny the homeless the right to live on the streets or beg on the subways. He flatly refused to reach out to racial demagogues like Sharpton or, for that matter, to the *New York Times*.

Giuliani understood that to win at his new game, he needed to do more than defy the received liberal wisdom; he also needed to get his own people's hands on the levers of power. This, too, he accomplished with a fair degree of success, even when it meant taking on popular figures like the schools chancellor, Ramon Cortines—and even when it meant installing Giuliani loyalists in positions for which loyalty was their only discernible qualification.

One of these was Cristyne Lategano, a major figure in both books and best known to New Yorkers as the press aide rumored to have had a long-running affair with the mayor. What never got into the papers was her incompetence: the City Hall newsroom was a shambles during her tenure. What she had going for her, well before the affair with her boss gathered steam, was total loyalty to the administration, registered in around-the-clock availability and a habit of warning Giuliani away from others whose fidelity she suspected. Needless to say, she was enormously unpopular within the administration.

Another Giuliani aide whose main credential was unquestioning loyalty was Tony Carbonetti, the son of Lou, Jr. Carbonetti was twenty-five years old, his résumé headed by a stint managing a bar in Boston, when the new mayor named him appointments secretary and chief patronage dispenser. (Since then he has graduated to chief of staff.) By all accounts, he did exactly as Giuliani wanted: Kirtzman quotes one unnamed administrator who estimates that 60 percent of the job applicants pushed at him by Carbonetti were qualified, 20 percent unqualified, and 20 percent "dirtbags."

As discomfiting as such stories must be to Giuliani fans, even more bothersome politically is the naked immensity of the mayor's ego, which has recurrently prevented him from allowing anyone else in his administration to take credit for any serious accomplishment. Exhibit A here is the ugly saga of the mayor's relations with William J. Bratton, his immensely popular first police commissioner.

Popularity, indeed, was the problem. Almost from the moment the new commissioner entered the administration, Giuliani began to worry that to Bratton would go the glory for the decline in crime. Both men believed in the "broken windows" theory, according to which the neglect of petty, quality-of-life crimes emboldens criminals and leaves ordinary citizens concerned that nobody is in charge. But the media sometimes made it seem that Bratton alone had brought the theory to New York.

Sure enough, when the crime rates tumbled, Bratton was out there explaining what he had done. From the mayor's point of view, the situation was made only worse by the fact that the commissioner seemed rather to enjoy the spotlight, turning up at high-profile restaurants and signing a six-figure deal to write a book about his accomplishments. Soon, the administration was announcing a review of the deal's propriety, and Giuliani aides were making themselves available to divulge details to a willing press about the commissioner's alleged peccadilloes.

The statistics tell us that Bratton was one of the most effective police commissioners in modern New York history. But in March 1996, he felt obliged to resign.

THERE IS nothing unusual, to put it mildly, in a politician wanting to take credit for every positive development on the landscape. But a one-man band in executive office is problematical, and nowhere more so than in a city needful of permanent change in the status quo. Any such change will require cadres committed to new ideas, not just to the man who embodies them. But because Giuliani's politics have been so utterly self-aggrandizing, it is now extremely difficult, as he approaches his final year in office, to see any signs of a movement prepared to carry on and extend the extraordinary revolution he launched seven years ago.

Making matters dicier than ever is the unsettling sight of the mayor reinventing himself a mile a minute as he settles in for his final year. His withdrawal from the Senate race put onstage a "new Giuliani" who would

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be, in the emetic phrase that was soon all over the local media, "kinder, gentler." Relating the change to his cancer diagnosis, Giuliani indicated that he was now in full outreach mode to spokesmen for the poor and minorities. His latest budget has increased funds for the Brooklyn Museum, whose subsidy he halted only last year after its board notoriously refused to withdraw a painting of the Virgin Mary composed in part of elephant dung. The *Daily News* is calling him "Deepak Giuliani," after the feel-good inspirational writer Deepak Chopra.

So the question with which I began is very much on the table: will his accomplishments endure? In the meantime, I think I am seeing more homeless on the streets.

The Zagat Effect

Steven A. Shaw

TWENTY-ONE YEARS ago, Tim and Nina Zagat, two lawyers intimately familiar with New York's restaurant and fine-dining scene, informally assembled the opinions of 200 of their acquaintances into a self-published survey of local establishments. Between then and now, their handy little red book of names, addresses, rankings, and consumer-driven evaluations has grown into a publishing empire.

The Zagats now put out best-selling guides to restaurants in 45 cities worldwide, including London, Paris, and Tokyo, as well as to U.S. hotels, resorts, and spas and, for New York and Los Angeles, other resources for food and entertaining. (The first *Survey of New York City Nightlife* has also recently emerged, edited by the Zagats' son, Ted.) Today, one can gain access to the contents of *Zagat* surveys via Palm Pilots, Wireless Application Protocol phones, and the Zagat Web site, which recently raised $31 million in equity financing. The overall enterprise is now valued at $120 million, and the Zagats are said to be thinking of an initial public offering next year.

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Anyone who has availed himself of a *Zagat* survey, with its narrow, elongated shape and distinctive red jacket, will hardly be at a loss to explain its appeal. The first thing a reader encounters upon opening this year's New York survey, for example, is a flagship list of the city's 50 "Most Popular Restaurants." This is followed by several other summary lists, including the top 50 restaurants ranked by food alone, top spots by cuisine, most-visited restaurants, and "Top Bangs for the Buck." At the back are several dozen indices, cross-referencing restaurants not only by type of cuisine but also by neighborhood and special features (e.g., Fireplaces, Outdoor Dining, Wheelchair Access).

But at the heart of the survey, and making up the bulk of its pages, are the capsule descriptions of some 1,800 restaurants, listed in alphabetical order. Here is a typical entry:

UNION SQUARE CAFÉ

F	D	S	C
27	24	26	$55

21 E. 16th St. (bet. 5th Ave. & Union Sq. W.), (212) 243-4020

"Danny Meyer's masterpiece" and NY's Most Popular Restaurant for four years running, this New American remains "unsurpassed" as a "fully satisfying dining experience" because its "formula works": offer "fabulous food" (from Michael Romano) in a "relaxed" yet "classy" space with "gold standard" service for less than your competition; "if you can get in," odds are it will "steal your heart."

The numerals along the top indicate, on a scale of one to 30, the rankings achieved by the restaurant in the areas of Food, Décor, and Service, respectively, plus the average Cost of a meal per person. In the body of the review, phrases in quotation marks derive from the comments on readers' survey forms that have been submitted to the *Zagat* editors and then strung together by them into a coherent whole. (In the case of the New York City survey, the Zagats themselves are heavily involved; for most other cities, they farm out the editorial work.) The book also contains graphical icons indicating whether a restaurant is open late or on Sundays, and whether it accepts cash only. In short, as a convenient and superbly organized guide, the survey is unparalleled; with a new edition appearing

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every year, it is timely and comprehensive as well.

With sales in excess of 600,000 copies per year in New York alone, and with nearly 20,000 loyal participants in the New York survey—whose sole recompense for filling out and submitting a form is a free copy of the $11.95 guide—it is unlikely that, in the foreseeable future, anybody will pose a serious challenge to the Zagats' supremacy. (The few efforts to compete with them have failed emphatically.) And there is also no question that the reverberations of the *Zagat* enterprise are felt in every quarter of the restaurant world. Even at the most elite levels, owners and chefs know that *Zagat* rankings are more important to success, not to say survival, than the reviews of all the city's newspapers combined.

THE FUNDAMENTAL premise of the *Zagat* survey, as stated by the Zagats themselves, is that "rating a restaurant on the basis of hundreds or even thousands of experiences [is] inherently more fair and accurate than relying on one reviewer and just a few meals." Stated this way, the notion appears reasonable enough: after all, at an average of 1,800 meals per restaurant surveyed, the 2000 guide for New York reflects no fewer than 3.2 million meals consumed. Surely that guarantees greater fairness and accuracy. Or does it?

To begin with, although it might come as a surprise to anyone who has not participated in a *Zagat* survey, the 30-point ratings in the book do not represent actual choices. In fact, the survey form is much cruder, offering only four choices, 0 through 3. Thus, a conscientious participant who believes that a restaurant's rank should be, say, 25 on a 30-point scale must choose either a 2 or a 3, each of which represents an inaccurate extreme. These ratings are then averaged and multiplied to give the appearance of a more nuanced evaluation.

Another problem arises with time lag. As any professional critic can testify, accuracy in a restaurant review requires taking careful notes and then writing relatively quickly: after a few days, much specific recollection will be lost (this applies to music and dance reviews as well). But the *Zagat* survey forms are mailed out once a year, with the specific intent that all restaurants be ranked at once and not necessarily in conjunction with actual meals. As with the simplified four-point scale, this encourages impressionistic rankings at the extremes and, for places that have dramatically improved or dramatically deteriorated, the possibility of wholesale error.

Perhaps most surprising of all, respondents to the *Zagat* survey are not required to document—through, for example, copies of receipts—that they have actually eaten the meals they claim to be evaluating. The survey's voting controls consist only of computer programs that scan for major irregularities and discrepancies, which would hardly prevent a shut-in living in Bozeman, Montana from voting in the New York survey. Nor is there anything to prevent determined people from voting multiple times for their friends' restaurants, evaluating restaurants visited long ago or ranked according to the opinions of others, or engaging in conduct calculated to teach a restaurant a lesson—or make it number one. Online voting, recently introduced, will no doubt make it even easier to cast fictitious and/or ill-considered ballots.

The consequences of this lack of safeguards have been many. In the 1998 survey, for example, Ratner's restaurant on the Lower East Side of New York was described as offering "chicken soup that will cure anything short of amputations." Succinct, yes; accurate, no. Ratner's (a famous establishment that has since regrettably closed) was a kosher dairy restaurant and had never in its long history served a bowl of chicken soup.

In this case, the inaccuracy, though allowed by the editors to sneak through uncorrected, could be chalked up to a single rogue reader. But the editors themselves have also been responsible for misinformation. When, for example, galleys of this year's Boston survey were mailed to the *Boston Herald*, the paper's restaurant reviewer noticed something fishy: one write-up, sounding for all the world as if based on actual visits, was of a restaurant that had not yet opened. Similarly, *Brill's Content* reported recently that *Zagat* employees themselves are sometimes sent to evaluate restaurants that open near to press time, thereby vitiating the whole point of the survey system.

Which brings us to the mini-reviews and their content. Admittedly, *Zagat* reviews are pithy; but pithiness does not preclude substance. Unfortunately, that substance is frequently so bland as to be uninformative. Thus, in the notice given to the Union Square Café, "fabulous food" is the only culinarily germane comment from a reader, while the editors' notation that the cuisine is New American is hardly meaningful. Throughout the survey, descriptions of restaurants either include no discussion whatsoever of the food or, at best, offer up undifferentiated pap like "amazing paella."

But bland is the least of it. Although the Zagats are at pains to call their capsule reviews "diner-written," it is they and their editors who select and assemble the quotations, and these quotations can be made to conform with just about any opinion—even one at odds with what the majority of survey participants have reported. In what may be the most outrageous abuse to date of this editorial prerogative, the 1999 *Zagat* survey informed its readers that the New York restaurant Patroon turned out food "better than our ratings show."

A poll's results can also be influenced by who participates in it. Although anybody can take part in a

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Zagat survey by requesting a form and sending in a self-addressed stamped envelope, the Zagats also distribute hundreds of thousands of unsolicited surveys to respondents of their own choosing. These include, in Tim Zagat's words, "white-collar institutions [like law firms and medical practices] where we know people eat out as a way of life" as well as food-and-wine clubs and anybody else the Zagats deem worthy. True, the final ratings are the final ratings, and no evidence has ever emerged of ballot tampering (the raw data have never been made available for evaluation); but at the very best the Zagats' carefully controlled experiment in culinary democracy raises more questions than it answers.

BUT LET us suppose that the democratic procedures were impeccable. Would they then constitute an appropriate means of rating restaurants?

The scores and rankings in the *Zagat* survey reflect, by definition, an average of the opinions gathered. But if you want to know how good a restaurant is, averages are seriously misleading. Thus, for four years running, according to *Zagat*, the number-one restaurant in New York has been Union Square Café. It is number one in the sense that it emerges first in response to this question on the survey: "What are your favorite New York restaurants?" It is true that other restaurants score higher than the Union Square Café in the areas of food, décor, and service, and the closest thing to a "best" restaurant in *Zagat*, based on scores alone, would be Le Bernardin; but this information appears on no chart.

Union Square Café is, indeed, a very good restaurant, one beloved by many New Yorkers for its compassionate service—it is perhaps the most unintimidating of the city's better restaurants—and its simple but intensely flavorful food. But with all due respect to that justly popular establishment, it is patently ridiculous to rank it ahead of a dozen other places, and in particular such world-class restaurants as Lespinasse, Jean Georges, and Daniel.

Another example of what can happen when one averages consumers with different levels of taste and (above all) experience was on display in the 1998-99 edition of the Zagats' *America's Best Meal Deals*. On its nationwide list of "Top Delis," not a single New York delicatessen was to be found; instead, the guide featured places like d'Bronx Deli in Kansas City (which apparently doubles as a pizzeria) and another establishment in Salt Lake City. Even in New York, where the Zagats draw on a presumably more sophisticated base and a far greater number of ballots, the survey disproportionately rewards what might be called "yokel pleasers" like Café des Artistes (the ninth most popular restaurant in the survey) and River Café.

Worse, it is a simple but distorting truth that people tend to prefer the restaurants they already frequent—witness the similarity between the *Zagat* "Traffic Report" and its list of "Most Popular Restaurants." The circular nature of this process has been well pinpointed by the critic Seymour Britchky:

> Once you learn to hate a restaurant you never go back, [but] since you do not evaluate a restaurant for *Zagat* unless you have been there in the past year, those who continue to rate a place are, disproportionately, its admirers—fans—while the opinions of detractors go unrecorded.

The *New York Times* critic William Grimes has labeled this phenomenon "The Zagat Effect," adding that once a restaurant gets a good rating, "diners flock to it . . . and, convinced that they are eating at a top-flight establishment, cannot bring themselves to believe otherwise."

Finally, what renders a popular survey truly suspect is that one has no sense of the reasoning process (if any) behind *Zagat*'s numerals and strung-together quips. There is no way of knowing whether the respondent who spoke of "amazing paella" has any familiarity whatsoever with Valencian cuisine, or is equipped to evaluate a given example of paella. By contrast, a professional restaurant reviewer brings a single voice, a certain degree of accountability, and concrete recommendations. In theory, he also brings expertise—and, by virtue of having dined at many more restaurants, a breadth of experience that offers a meaningful basis of comparison.*

And there is another consideration here. It is the vision of great chefs that ultimately creates educated consumers and hence the demand for better and better cuisine. Under the sway of a *Zagat*-style survey, however, a restaurant that wants to survive and flourish will find itself pandering to average tastes the way an assistant professor of English saddled with the need to score high on student-evaluation forms inevitably finds himself assigning easier and more popular texts. One does not, after all, gain the accolades of the *Zagat* constituency by presenting challenging, complex, or advanced cuisine. One gains the love of the *Zagat* reader by serving tuna burgers (as does the Union Square Café—and very good ones at that).

Of course, the Zagats themselves dismiss all such strictures as the carping of elitists, and defend their survey method with Nader-like appeals to democracy and "the people." But, their thumb-on-the-scale methods aside, this is specious, and utterly self-serving. It is as if the editors of *Consumer Reports* were to declare that their patient, meticulous, objective, and very expensive testing of air conditioners and washing machines actually resulted in a less accurate product guide than one based

* It is unfortunately true that the credibility of professional restaurant criticism is today at an all-time low (see my "Culinary Correctness" in last month's COMMENTARY). In this sense, the Zagats have stepped into a vacuum.

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solely on the random and self-selected reports of buyers, whose opinions alone they would henceforth solicit. No, in those 3.2 million meals, bought and consumed not by them but by their unpaid collaborators at an average cost (we are informed) of $33.17 per meal, the Zagats definitely have a good thing going. Whether they are advancing the cause of informed choice is another question entirely.

AS THEIR empire has grown, Tim and Nina Zagat have increasingly stepped outside their roles as pollsters and have positioned themselves as power brokers in the industry upon which they report. When they dine out, they expect restaurants to treat them like royalty, however obnoxious their behavior. According to press reports, they are in the habit of appearing unannounced at the most exclusive establishments and demanding to be seated ahead of ordinary, reservation-holding citizens—so much for democracy—or charging into the kitchen without permission in order to talk to the chef. Because they are the two individuals most feared by the American restaurant industry, their demands are invariably accommodated by fawning owners and maître d's.

Beyond bullying restaurants into doing their bidding, the Zagats now also aspire to impose their views on the industry and the dining public through self-aggrandizing schemes like their new "Diners' Bill of Rights." The enumerated rights range from the superfluous ("The right to complain to the manager") to the picayune ("The right to make special dietary requests") to the impossible ("The right to be seated within 10 minutes of reservation") to, inevitably, the politico-cultural ("The right to smoke-free and cellular phone-free seating"). But such are the prerogatives of power. As Huey Long and other successful populists have always known, when you speak in the name of "the people," you get to call the shots.

"Survivor" and the End of Television

John Podhoretz

THE FINEST piece of political rhetoric to be heard in this election year did not come from the mouth of a candidate for office, or from the pen of his highly paid speechwriter. Rather, it was delivered on a blisteringly hot night in a clearing on a South Seas island by a thirty-eight-year-old female truck driver from Wisconsin, speaking extemporaneously and directing her words at a woman she believed had betrayed her in their common quest for a prize of $1 million.

"I was your friend at the beginning of this," said Susan Hawk to Kelly Wigglesworth:

> At the time you were sweeter than me. I'm not a very openly nice person. I'm just frank, forward, and tell you the way it is. But . . . you're very two-faced and manipulative to get where you're at anywhere in life. That's why you fail all the time. . . .
>
> What goes around comes around. It's here. You will not get my vote. My vote will go to Richard. And I hope that it is the one vote that makes you lose the money. If not, so be it. I'll shake your hand, and I'll go on from here. But if I ever pass you along in life again and you were lying there dying of thirst, I would not give you a drink of water. I would let the vultures take you and do whatever they want with you. With no regrets. . . .
>
> This island is pretty much full of only two things: snakes and rats. And in the end we have Richard the snake, who knowingly went after prey, and Kelly, who turned into the rat that ran around like rats do on the island, trying to run from the snake.
>
> I feel we owe it to this island's spirit that we have come to know to let it be in the end the way Mother Nature intended it to be. For the snake to eat the rat.

Susan Hawk's invective blasted forth on national television before an audience of 40 million people. It erupted in the 13th and final episode of *Survivor*—the much-discussed game show featuring sixteen hitherto anonymous Americans who were flown to a deserted island, divided into teams, forced to compete in occasionally stomach-churning challenges of strength and nerve (like eating live earthworms), and then

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winnowed one at a time over the course of more than five weeks by a vote of the island-mates themselves until only one remained to collect the $1-million prize—not to mention a spanking new Plymouth Aztec.

What was so striking about Susan Hawk's speech, and what induced gasps across the country, was its unvarnished biliousness. (The object of her scorn, Kelly Wigglesworth, had voted against her the previous day when there were only three contestants remaining.) In some ways, her vituperative eloquence turned out to be the real climax of the show, even more so than the surprise victory of Richard Hatch, an openly gay Machiavellian fellow from Rhode Island who had spent a great deal of time cavorting in the nude and to whom much of America had taken a distinct dislike. But the two taken together—Hatch's bad-guy victory, Hawk's raw fury—hold the keys to understanding the extraordinary success of *Survivor*.

Whatever its faults, and they were manifold, *Survivor* became a sensation in part because it offered viewers a heady and original mix of fantasy fulfillment and honest emotion. The fantasy element was the free 39-day vacation to the South Seas, at the end of which lay the prospect of a pot of gold and a car. The honest emotions on display were all the churning feelings engendered by a summer at sleepaway camp—resentment, quick intimacy, disappointment, momentary kindness, the thrill of joining a secret clique. But it was the possibility of the unexpected—the surprise ending, the uncontrolled outburst, and, throughout, similar if less spectacular violations of the central tenets of popular culture—that set *Survivor* apart and made it such a success.

Not that it was without precedent. The "reality-television" genre, of which *Survivor* is by far the most popular example, had its origins nine years ago when the cable channel MTV premiered *The Real World*, a show that is still running. This program brings together seven college-age youngsters in a glamorous living space and follows them for four months "to see what happens when people stop being polite and start getting real." What happens, for the most part, is some pretty lousy behavior—racial and sexual strife as well as heavy-duty flirting and a tendency toward spring-break-like exhibitionism—that usually leads to one member's being expelled by the others. The only prize offered by *The Real World* is the chance to be on a television show that is edited like a music video and structured like a multicharacter situation comedy, with impossibly good-looking and colorful people who play to the camera like pros.

Survivor, based on a Dutch program, was in the same mold but more original. For one thing, the people on the show (with the exception of a very impressive seventy-two-year-old retired Navy SEAL named Rudy Boesch) were far more mundane in appearance and spirit. For another, they seemed to respond in authentic ways to the situation in which they had been placed. For television, that really *was* revolutionary. The question is, what does it signify?

EVER SINCE it staged its blitzkrieg through American popular culture 50 years ago, television has been a medium notable for sheer unadulterated meretriciousness. It is a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, in-home *reductio ad absurdum*—only without a trace of irony. Television takes people—actors, newscasters, pundits, everybody else who flickers there—and shrinks them down to fit literally in a box usually no larger than two feet across. Indeed, *everything* on TV is shrunk to fit. Politics is reduced to the 30-second commercial and the four-second soundbite; drama and comedy are reduced to purposeless incident. Every 30-minute sitcom and 60-minute police drama is drenched in plot, but at the end of each week's episode the central characters are left so unchanged by their experiences that they can go through the same gyrations a week later as if nothing had happened.

Americans have been around the television track for five decades now, and are thoroughly expert in its clichés and devices. No wonder, then, that over the past ten years there has occurred what a psychiatrist might call a withdrawal of affect. Americans still watch television, if not as much as they once did; but they are simply not as involved. The last prime-time hit to draw an audience of the size networks once expected of their most-watched shows was *ER*, and it premiered six years ago. Although some shows still have passionate followers, those followers number, for television, relatively few. Two decades ago, *The X Files*, a program about the supernatural, would have survived for only a matter of weeks before cancellation for lack of audience; but these days, driven by the enthusiasm of about 10 million viewers, it has lasted seven years on the Fox network.

Some of this decline is due to the cable-TV explosion, which has eroded the networks' market share from 90 percent before 1980 to just about 50 percent today, and has altogether atomized the viewing audience. In 1970 it was a fair bet that almost everybody was watching the same shows. If there was a common culture in this large and heterogeneous country, it was the television culture: an Oregonian and a Vermonter who had never been more than 10 miles from home but suddenly found themselves standing next to each other on a line at Disneyland could at least conduct a passable conversation about the previous week's episode of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

Now there is no common television culture. A medium that once cast a large net and built an audience the way a presidential campaign builds a

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voter coalition—providing a daddy character for men, a mommy character for women, a maid character for the urban working class, and three children of various ages for the kids—is now driven by demographics. Networks are no longer broadcasters; instead, they are increasingly what marketers call "narrowcasters." Programs like *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* appeal exclusively to girls between the ages of six and eighteen; others appeal exclusively to blacks (the most-watched network program among blacks, *The Parkers*, ranks 120th among television programs overall); and so forth.

This is where *Survivor* appeared to break the mold. It was the first new TV show in years to generate something like a common cultural experience across the United States, and only one of two old-style broadcast hits to debut on network television since *ER*. The other is *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, a more conventional trivia/game show that unexpectedly revived the sagging fortunes of ABC just as *Survivor* brought new life to the moribund CBS.

Like *Survivor*, *Millionaire* offers the promise of a pot of gold. Again like *Survivor*, it also offers a glance at something real. Contestants have to answer multiple-choice questions; in the highly unlikely event that they get all sixteen right, they win. But, in contrast to other game shows, there is no clock—contestants have taken up to 40 minutes to answer a single question. And so they sit in what the host, Regis Philbin, calls the "hot seat," worried and excited, trying to puzzle out an answer, while the sympathetic Philbin encourages them to take their time. The whole business can prove truly nerve-wracking, especially if the viewer at home happens to know the correct answer.

WHAT, THEN, does it all mean? The rise of "reality television" has given pundits new cause to maunder over the nation's moral health. Their exegeses, Gibbon-like in tone if not in style, suggest that we have developed a late-empire hunger for spectacles involving the humiliation and degradation of ordinary people. This alarming thesis, which applies as much to participants as to the audiences that watch them, was first advanced in the early 1980's when the talk-show host Phil Donahue added a new spice to the pablum served up on daytime television by encouraging citizens to share their most intimate secrets in exchange for a free trip to Chicago and a night in a hotel.

Have Americans become so immodest that large numbers of them are willing to violate their own privacy for the temporary pleasure of appearing on television? Or, to put it another way, has the "thymotic urge"—the hunger for recognition—that Francis Fukuyama diagnosed as the existential condition at the "end of history" so infiltrated the American soul that we have become willing to submit ourselves to the voyeuristic fetishes of others?

Before we collapse into an anxious heap awaiting the second Flood, however, we would do well to remember that 270 million people live in the United States. If you add up those who have applied to appear on *Survivor* and other such shows and those willing to appear on daytime talk shows, the actual or potential participants in "reality television" number around 50,000. That is one-fiftieth of 1 percent of the population.

As for viewers, here too the picture is at least somewhat more complicated than the pundits allow. Reality television offers a series of temptations simultaneously repellent and irresistible. Like highway rubbernecking—wherein everybody slows down in hopes of glimpsing a mangled car or body—reality TV offers us the chance to see human wreckage and to feel superior to the people involved in it or victimized by it. But it also gives us a chance to admire people when they do well or soar above their circumstances, as the contestants on *Survivor* did every day by toughing it out under difficult conditions. It is not so easy to separate the illicit pleasures of voyeurism—the secretly hoped-for injury—from the higher pleasures of admiration. In its own way, what is on offer in reality television resembles the combination of elements that has provided sports fans with compelling entertainment for millennia, minus the rules.

America is not coming to an end as a result of *Survivor*. But neither does the show signify something truly new, a breakthrough departure; the hour is too late for that. Rather, it represents the extreme, logical conclusion of the first era of the television age.

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Books in Review

Regressive Education

Left Back:
A Century of Failed
School Reforms
by Diane Ravitch

Random House. 555 pp. $30.00

Reviewed by
Sol Stern

DIANE RAVITCH has long been one of the sanest voices among the country's education experts. A prolific writer whose career has included professorships at Columbia University's Teachers College and New York University, a stint as assistant secretary of education in the Bush administration, and now a senior post at the Brookings Institution, Ravitch has championed the idea of national education standards and been an outspoken critic of the ethnic cheerleading that goes by the name of multiculturalism. For both of these positions, needless to say, she has been scorned as a conservative and an elitist by the education establishment.

SOL STERN *is a contributing editor of the Manhattan Institute's* City Journal.

In her new book on the various "progressive" reforms that have swept over the country's schools during the last hundred years, Ravitch confirms her standing not only as our preeminent historian of education but also, despite her detractors, as the most consistent of education egalitarians. Convinced that most children, including racial minorities and the poor, benefit from a content-rich curriculum and can meet high academic goals, Ravitch is a strong advocate of universal "liberal education," by which she means nothing fancier than making available to all children "the systematic study of language and literature, science and mathematics, history and the arts, and foreign languages." As her meticulous research shows, however, this democratic ideal has been under relentless assault in the U.S. for over a century—and from a most unexpected direction.

AROUND THE turn of the 20th century, America's still-nascent public-school system was at an important crossroad. With a rapidly modernizing economy, public officials began to realize that education could no longer end, as it then did in most of the country, at the elementary level. At the same time, school enrollments began to grow at a phenomenal rate, driven primarily by the arrival of waves of immigrants but also by the first comprehensive efforts to educate American blacks. Devising an education system appropriate to these various needs became a public question of the utmost urgency.

For the country's leading thinkers on the subject, the answer was "progressive" education, an approach that they considered at once practical, humane, and informed by the most advanced science of the day. Ravitch devotes particular attention to the work of G. Stanley Hall. The first American to earn a doctorate in psychology from Harvard, a professor at Johns Hopkins (where the philosopher John Dewey was one of his star pupils), and eventually the president of Clark University, Hall tirelessly promoted a mode of learning that, in keeping with the ideas of Rousseau no less than of Darwin, would "keep out of nature's way." In a 1901 address to the National

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Education Association, he spelled out what this meant practically:

> We must overcome the fetishism of the alphabet, of the multiplication table, of grammars, of scales, and of bibliolatry. . . . There are many who ought not to be educated, and who would be better in mind, body, and morals if they knew no school. What should it profit a child to gain the world of knowledge and lose his own health? Cramming and overschooling have impaired many a feeble mind, for which, as the proverb says, nothing is so dangerous as ideas too large for it.

Another key figure among turn-of-the-century progressives was Edward L. Thorndike, a young professor at the recently opened Teachers College of Columbia and a pioneer in the field of intelligence testing. For Thorndike and other elite educators, the IQ test furnished another scientific justification for doing away with the traditional curriculum. After all, if intelligence was a fixed and heritable human quality, what was the point of encouraging less capable children to study difficult academic subjects?

Within a couple of decades, this agenda was being promoted not only by the great university centers of pedagogy at Columbia, Harvard, Chicago, and Stanford but also by teachers themselves, through the good offices of the National Education Association. Thus was born the "child-centered" classroom, in which teachers, especially in the early grades, abandoned the traditional task of conveying knowledge and instead attempted to facilitate their pupils' "self-discovery." The idea was that children learned best, and most happily, by doing—that is, by taking part in activities related to their daily lives. At the same time, schools took it upon themselves to sort children into categories according to ability, with the promising few given the academic background necessary for college and the less-bright multitude directed into more practical courses of study.

Ravitch describes in mordant detail the real-life consequences of these "crackpot" ideas. Entire school districts virtually eliminated difficult academic subjects, substituting "life-adjustment" studies and occupational training. The most obvious losers, she notes, were black children, who were now more easily denied access to the basic knowledge and academic skills that were the keys to their advancement. Stereotyped because of their low IQ scores, they were often deemed suitable only for studying agricultural and industrial trades.

THE PROGRESSIVES did not always have their way, of course. Individual parents, teachers, and school districts resisted, as did a number of prominent intellectuals. In 1940, the journalist Walter Lippmann lambasted progressive schools for possessing "no common faith, no common body of principle, no common body of knowledge, [and] no common moral and intellectual discipline." In a more positive vein, Robert Maynard Hutchins, the president of the University of Chicago, tried to breathe new life into traditional liberal education with his "Great Books" program—an effort denounced as protofascist by a number of progressive educators.

Eventually, Ravitch observes, the movement for progressive education was forced to bow to certain realities. With the postwar economy beginning to shift from manufacturing to services, and with some 70 percent of American children earning a high-school diploma by the end of the 1950's, it became clear that students needed high-order skills if they were to succeed economically. Moreover, the Supreme Court's 1954 decision desegregating the schools, as well as the subsequent civil-rights revolution, focused attention on the huge gap in achievement between black and white children. Relegating large numbers of students to vocational education was no longer an option.

By the 1960's, Ravitch shows, what remained of the old progressive mix was a deep hostility to serious academic study and to the "imposition" of adult authority in the classroom—ideas that received a strong boost from the decade's wider countercultural currents. A number of best-sellers formed the vanguard of what Ravitch calls the "pedagogical liberation movement." Authors like Jonathan Kozol, Herbert Kohl, James Herndon, Neil Postman, and A.S. Neill not only attacked the admittedly terrible conditions in urban public schools but ended up arguing that formal education was altogether oppressive and damaging to children.

One result of this liberationist philosophy, Ravitch believes, was a precipitous decline in academic standards—and performance—from which the country has yet to recover. From 1963 to 1980, she notes, the average score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test fell by more than 50 points on the verbal section and 35 points in math. In keeping with the results of earlier progressive "reforms," the biggest victims were not the children of the middle class but disadvantaged minority children whose only path to social advancement lay in academically rigorous schools.

Ravitch carries her critique right up to the last decades of the 20th century, citing such recent atrocities as the "whole-language" movement and the "new math," both of which emphasize the spontaneous and "natural" way in which children can supposedly become literate and numerate on their own. Her book ends on an encouraging note, however, with a chapter about the standards movement of the late 80's and 90's, in which she herself played a prominent role. As she concludes, only by setting high academic goals for *all* students—and holding the entire education system accountable for meeting those goals—can we hope for genuine progress in our schools.

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IF THERE is one shortcoming in Ravitch's otherwise masterful book, it is her failure to discuss how these destructive educational ideas, originating in a handful of elite institutions, spread so quickly into every corner of the country. It seems clear, after all, that the extent of the damage has a great deal to do with the long-standing existence of a coercive public-education monopoly linked directly to the nation's education schools, thus making it easier for "progressives" and other theorists to influence classrooms simply by winning over the right bureaucrats and union leaders. Breaking this stranglehold is one of the chief attractions of giving parents real educational choice by means of vouchers and charter schools; these are policies that Ravitch supports, but, unfortunately, she here neglects to make the connection.

All the same, Ravitch's richly documented chronicle of a century of educational folly makes an invaluable contribution to the ongoing debate about our schools. In particular, it will provide embattled parents with much-needed historical perspective, helping them to say no the next time teachers and administrators try to pass off the latest educational fad as if it were confirmed scientific truth.

Very Little England

The Abolition of Britain
by Peter Hitchens
Encounter. 332 pp. $22.95

Reviewed by
David Pryce-Jones

BRITAIN TODAY presents a puzzling spectacle. Outwardly, materially, the country is prospering, and there is no particular call for change. The huge majority of the population continue to subscribe to inherited moral values and traditions; they also seem to appreciate as ever the great institutions of state that in the tests of war and peace down the centuries have guaranteed freedom under the law—the one thing that made Britain what it was, and an example to the rest of the world.

At the same time, however, the country is in the hands of a government that is single-mindedly recasting or scrapping these institutions of state. The ancient union among England, Wales, Scotland, and Ulster has been broken. Membership in the House of Lords now involves party patronage rather than hereditary principle. Among other novelties, proportional representation has been introduced in some elections and may be extended to others; it is now a criminal offense to use imperial weights and measures rather than the new metric system; and trial by jury may soon be restricted.

These changes across so many different fields, all introduced under the current Labor prime minister, Tony Blair, are dramatically hollowing out the laws, the morals and manners, and the entire culture developed over so long a period of time by the institutions of state. The overall "project," as Blair likes to call it, is to decompose Britain into a social democracy on the European model. The country will then be ready to take its place in the continental system known as the European Union. At that point, it will become answerable to the institutions and laws of other people with other cultures.

All this, Peter Hitchens writes in *The Abolition of Britain*, is nothing less than a revolution, though one that has admittedly been a long time in the making. "I cannot guarantee," he adds, "that it will not lead to bloodshed in the end."

A TROTSKYITE in his youth, Hitchens has himself evolved into a Tory. He is now a columnist for the *Daily Express*, a once great and patriotic paper that has dwindled into a Blairite mouthpiece. That is piquant enough; more piquant still, he is the brother of Christopher Hitchens, the well-known journalist and champion of left-wing causes. *The Abolition of Britain* is Peter Hitchens's cry from the heart. Written in prose that meets Orwell's recommendation to be as clear as a pane of glass, it describes how a small and self-chosen group has imposed its views upon people who apparently have yet to comprehend that their laws and their freedom are at risk, and it pleads for a counterrevolution before it is too late.

Hitchens's point of departure is the funeral in 1965 of Winston Churchill, the last prime minister to believe unquestioningly in the old order of Protestantism and the empire that had formed Britain and its institutions, as well as the national character. In 1940 Churchill rallied the nation against the threat to its independence posed by Nazi Germany. But victory in that conflict bred, in Hitchens's view, a false myth of British superiority that turned out to be all the more wounding when it became plain that real power now lay with America. The consequence, at least in one portion of the elite, was a recoil from power itself and from the ideals that had accompanied it.

In common with a number of other commentators, Hitchens pinpoints the 1960's as the crucial period of degeneration. From then on, no one, not even a conservative like Margaret Thatcher, ever again defended with Churchillian conviction the values once embodied in Protestantism and the empire. Those who ought to have known better hurried to make concessions and fudge their principles. There was no Edmund Burke to defend and rescue the old institutions. John Betjeman and Philip Larkin wrote elegies, but they were only poets.

Hitchens's catalogue of horrors is familiar enough. One by one over

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DAVID PRYCE-JONES, *the British political analyst, is the author of* The Strange Death of the Soviet Empire.

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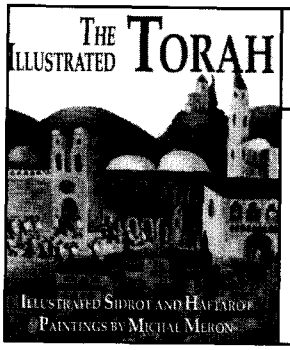

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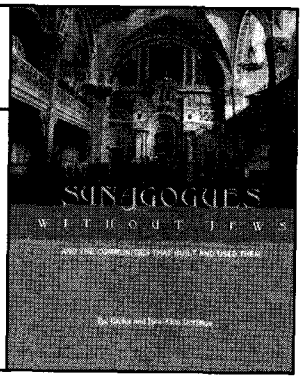

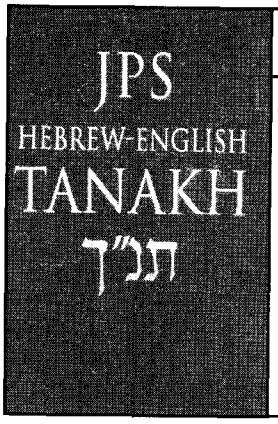

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the past 30 years, he writes, moral guidelines and injunctions once rooted in law have been construed as intolerable restrictions on liberty or "rights," and junked accordingly. Slanted textbooks make children ashamed of simple patriotism, and twist the achievements of empire into accusatory examples of "racism." Progressive teaching has produced millions of adults who are functionally illiterate and innumerate. With the Bible and the liturgy rendered into the language of welfare-state bureaucratese, Protestantism is quite without moral or intellectual influence. That other revolution of our times—the sexual one—has thoroughly overturned the usual human relationships and caused "behavior once defined as deviant . . . to appear mainstream."

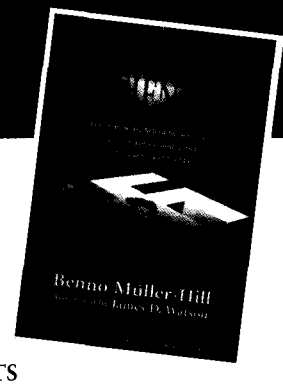
Hitchens is particularly good at digging into the record and identifying those responsible for the surrounding wreckage. A few of his culprits, like the liberal politician Roy Jenkins, or satirists like Alan Bennett and Jonathan Miller, are well-known. But others are for the most part relatively obscure and even insignificant: E.R. Dance and Lady Plowden, whose separate initiatives in the 60's worked to undermine standards of excellence in the schools; the bishop who helped pave the way for defending pornography in the name of free speech; another who described the Resurrection as "conjuring with bones." These were no Tom Paines, and at other times would have remained invisible and unheard, single-issue pamphleteers and busybodies. What unites them, and makes them revolutionaries, is their sense of their own absolute virtue and their ability to harness the machinery of state to their ends.

Another funeral—this one of Princess Diana in 1997—serves Hitchens as a symbolic marker of the new order. Capitalizing on the sadness of the event, Blair misrepresented this most privileged of women as the People's Princess, and as a victim to boot. Bogus emotion swung the public against the royal family, simultaneously projecting Blair in ghostly outline as a future president of a populist British republic, if not of Europe itself.

THE DISCONTENTS described by Hitchens are hardly the exclusive property of Britain. In the developed world, they are universal, and Americans may well feel they hold the patent on them. But Hitchens is surely right that the Blair govern-

Murderous Science

Elimination by Scientific Selection of
Jews, Gypsies, and Others in Germany 1933-1945



By Benno Müller-Hill, *Institut für Genetik, Universität Köln*

The Human Genome Project has associated many mutant genes with physical ailments and the genetic basis of certain behavioral characteristics is being seriously discussed. In the 1920s and 1930s, advocates for eugenics claimed that genes influenced human behavior, but with no valid evidence. In Germany the Nazis adopted their ideas to justify violent anti-semitism. In this new, expanded edition of the English translation of his compelling book Tödliche Wissenschaft, the distinguished German geneticist Benno Müller-Hill documents the long-suppressed collusion of eugenics and racist politics which resulted in the mass murder of millions. In a new Afterword, he warns against the misuse today of newly emerging knowledge about human heredity. In an accompanying essay, Nobel Laureate James D. Watson, an architect of this new era of genetics, vividly describes a recent visit to Berlin and his impressions of the legacy of eugenics in German science.

1998, 256 pp. Paper $29 ISBN 0-87969-531-5

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Autobiographical Note

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ment is the first to place itself enthusiastically at the head of the revolution, to welcome the destruction of the past and to work toward widening the fissures still further. In Hitchens's image, having done their part to rot the institutional timbers from within, the Blairites now propose to take a chainsaw to what remains.

In the end, Hitchens comes close to convincing himself that the revolution he has described is unstoppable and irreversible. The Tories, he supposes, "will never again be in office." In another context, many a pundit used to talk in this same historically determined and defeatist language about Communism. In the final crisis, however, the Russian people overcame decades of fearsome pressure and indoctrination and chose independence.

In Britain a comparable parting of the ways may be in the offing. For Hitchens, the decisive crisis will take place when Britain once and for all has to face the question of whether or not to abandon sterling for the euro and thus surrender on European terms to the European Union—for him, nothing less than a choice between the familiar national life of the past and the future proposed by the Blairite elite. Although weakened by misleading arguments and poor leadership, will the British finally face this test as they faced the test of war in 1940? Or are they already no longer the people they once were, and has even their patriotism been drained of meaning?

Optimists have seen signs of hope in the recent mini-uprising against the Blair government over the price of fuel and the seemingly miraculous recovery of the Tories from their slump in the opinion polls. Hitchens's book was of course written before these events, but they should somewhat dissipate his gloom. Nevertheless, as his far-reaching analysis valuably reminds us, the rot has penetrated so deeply that the future of the national idea in Britain remains an open question.

LIFE STORIES

JERUSALEM, TAKE ONE!
Memoirs of a Jewish Filmmaker
Alan Rosenthal

As a witness to so much recent Israeli history through a camera's viewfinder, documentary filmmaker Alan Rosenthal himself makes as much of an interesting subject as the events he documents. The Eichmann trial, the development of Israel Television, the Oslo agreement, the search for the menorah from the Second Temple, the history of Zionism on the television screen, and the Yom Kippur War and Project Renewal are but a few of the recent moments in Israeli history that Rosenthal and his camera have witnessed. As he recalls these events with humor and wit, Rosenthal's words recapture the emotions and feel of those times as vividly as his lens recorded their passing.

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SPAIN'S CAUSE WAS MINE
A Memoir of an American Medic in the Spanish Civil War
Hank Rubin
Foreword by Peter N. Carroll

In 1937, Hank Rubin, a twenty-year-old Jewish pre-med student at UCLA, volunteered for service in the International Brigades combating fascists in the Spanish Civil War. Making no apologies for his youthful ideology, Rubin recalls the heroics and sufferings he witnessed and experienced in Spain, as well as the disappointing treatment he received upon return.

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Back to Uganda

His Brother's Keeper: Israel and Diaspora Jewry in the Twenty-first Century
by Yossi Beilin
Schocken. 272 pp. $24.00

Reviewed by
Ruth R. Wisse

YOSSI BEILIN, currently Israel's Minister of Justice, is best known as the architect of the Oslo Accords, the negotiations conducted with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) that resulted in the formal agreement signed by Yitzhak Rabin and Yasir Arafat at the White House on September 13, 1993. In a recent account of his role in that process, Beilin characterized himself as a man in a hurry. "I have continued to believe throughout my life that time was my greatest enemy, and that I had to attain my objectives with the minimum possible delay." No one, surely, has ever doubted his zeal.

Until 1993, Beilin's objectives were straightforward enough. Convinced that Israel was pursuing a mistaken foreign policy by seeking to link the Palestinian population to Jordan as part of an overall regional peace, he joined with members of a tiny "club" under the supervision of Shimon Peres to set up his own direct contacts with the PLO in order to formulate plans for a Palestinian state. The details Beilin has provided of these discussions are perhaps less significant than his description of how he got things done within Israel's recalcitrant and, to him, wrongheaded democracy. "Plotting a course against the tide, knowing from the start that one's actions or words are sure to be unpopular, and, in spite of that, creating a fact that cannot possibly be ignored—this was my modus operandi." The means, in short, were justified by the end: by forcing a Palestinian state on his countrymen, Beilin would be helping to bring Israel out of "the Middle Ages," a self-evidently laudable goal whatever the cost.

In *His Brother's Keeper*, Beilin now turns his attention from Israel and the Palestinians to a no less daunting project, the reform of the Jewish people worldwide. As he sees it, the gist of the problem lies in another form of medievalism: the "Gordian knot" that ties the Jewish religion to Jewish peoplehood. He proposes to cut this knot in one stroke, by neutralizing the religious factor: "It does not make sense in the 21st century, when most of the Jews in the world are not religious, that they will continue to leave the 'Who is a Jew?' question to religious authorities."

By "religious," Beilin here means not only the Orthodox—that is, adherents of halakhic law as interpreted by rabbis—but any form of Judaism, including Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist, that defines Jewishness in some relation to God. The idea of a national religion is, to Beilin, reactionary by definition. He wants Israel itself to become a thoroughly secular state, and, since the Israeli model of citizenship already allows someone like him to function as a Jew without pretending to be religious, he proposes to apply that model to all of Jewry.

In locating his sense of urgency about *this* matter, Beilin reverts to an argument that his maternal grandfather, a Russian Zionist named Yosef Bregman, once had with Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism. In 1903, Great Britain had offered Herzl a provisional area of Jewish refuge in Africa. Herzl himself favored accepting this temporary shelter as an escape hatch for Europe's endangered Jews, but when the offer was put before that year's Zionist Congress, East European delegates like Bregman opposed it as a treacherous deviation from the goal of a national home in the Jewish homeland.

Today, Yossi Beilin retroactively sides with Herzl's pragmatism and flexibility and against his own "zealous, impatient, and uncompromising" forebear. Herzl, in Beilin's reading, was only interested in getting the Jews out of harm's way, and "not at all concerned with the question of Jewish continuity or Judaism." Hence, he would never have proposed a Jewish state in the first place "if he thought that it would have required an ongoing struggle for existence." Indeed, had Herzl been better informed about America, he would have gone *there* instead, and, once there, would certainly never have moved to the Israel we know today, burdened as it is by "the dangers of war and terrorism" and "the enormous influence of the ultra-Orthodox."

This is not to say that Beilin is altogether unambivalent about the country where he thinks Herzl might have preferred to settle. When this book was published in Hebrew, it bore the title, *Moto shel hadod me' amerika*: "The Death of the American Uncle." The words refer to the sharp decline of American Jewry through intermarriage and the attrition of identity, but also to the shift of power between a more confident Israel and the Diaspora on which it was once dependent. Beilin makes light of what American Jews do for Israel—even, as it happens, what they have done for it in the past—and he is proud that Israel has now indisputably emerged as the center and leader of the Jewish world. And yet, he also wants Israel itself to become a smaller America, a liberal, secularized place where Jews can live free of military or religious burdens.

This brings him to the question of "What To Do?," the title of a programmatic chapter on how to revive

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RUTH R. WISSE, *who is professor of Yiddish literature and comparative literature at Harvard, is the author of* The Modern Jewish Canon, *published this fall by Free Press and discussed in the October issue of* COMMENTARY *by Hillel Halkin ("Writing Jewish").*

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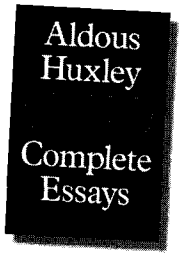

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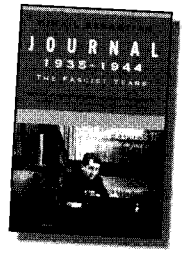

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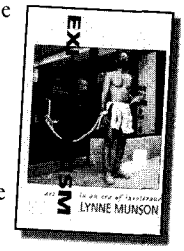
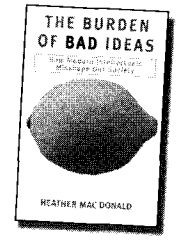


Surveying the art world in an era of intolerance, Lynne Munson explores "the advance of post-modernist academism and how its orthodoxies and prejudices have affected museums, the teaching of art history, the politics of the NEA, and the lives of independent artists. The subject is hot. Her tone is cool. Her case histories speak for themselves. This is a brave book."—ANDREW FORGE, painter and professor of art emeritus, Yale School of Art.

HEATHER MAC DONALD

The Burden of Bad Ideas



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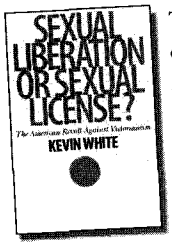
Sexual Liberation or Sexual License?



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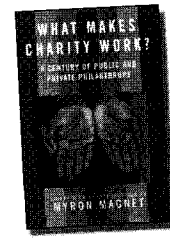
MYRON MAGNET, EDITOR

What Makes Charity Work?



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American Jewry *and* to Americanize Israel.

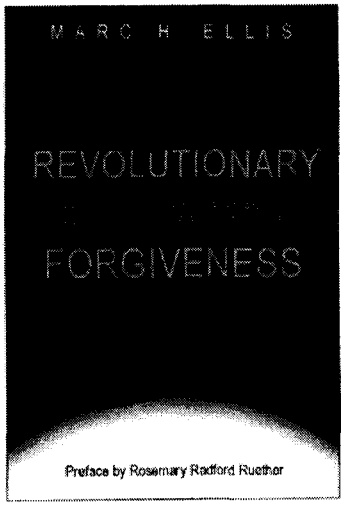
The first of Beilin's proposed innovations is secular conversion. Whereas, he writes, American Jews in great numbers marry non-Jews; whereas religious conversion "all too often . . . involves a white lie"; and whereas Judaism is not simply a religion but also "something else," therefore non-Jews should be able to join that "something else" simply by affirming their identification with the Jewish people. The Jewish community might ask for references from other Jews, and perhaps even for some "knowledge of Jewish history," but essentially it would take the convert's wish at face value.

The second proposal is for a new institutional structure to replace the many organizations that currently mediate between the Diaspora and Israel. Israel Bonds, the Jewish National Fund, the United Jewish Appeal, the World Zionist Congress, the Jewish Agency—Beilin calls for dismantling all of them, *at once*. In their stead, he would establish a "House of Israel," a new representative body that "would enlist a million members from Israel and the Diaspora and then conduct elections throughout the Jewish world." Granting equal standing to "Zionists and non-Zionists" alike, it would meet on a regular basis and have "resources at its disposal" to exert influence on a whole range of issues. For the rest, the Internet will link and support a "virtual community" of Jews worldwide.

WHAT ARE we to make of this? The sheer fatuousness of Beilin's plans, although it may not be their most troubling element, is difficult to overlook, and is rather startling in an author who brandishes so many academic credentials and decades of public service. To start with his proposed overhaul of Jewish peoplehood, it does not seem to have occurred to Beilin to wonder why, if Jewishness is to become a matter of self-definition, anyone, let alone the millions he envisages, would bother formally to convert to it. As for his new "democratic partnership," the House of Israel, the very idea of an organization of both Zionists and non-Zionists suggests that the sovereignty of the Jewish state is still up for grabs, itself a peculiar assumption for one who holds high office in that state's government. Suppose its million members—including some of those self-declared converts—were to decide in favor of yielding Haifa to the Arabs, or, alternatively, the immediate conquest of Damascus. Then what?

It turns out, though, that Beilin's sloppiness as a thinker is conveniently in sync with his larger strategy, which just happens to be diametrically opposed to the one followed by the early Zionists. Both Herzl and Beilin's grandfather undertook to persuade their fellow Jews to assume new and onerous obligations, requiring huge personal self-sacrifice and national discipline. Zionism (like, in that respect, Judaism itself) was a hard sell: if Herzl was prepared to accept temporary refuge in Uganda, it was not, *pace* Beilin, because he did not want a Jewish state but only because he realized how long it might take to secure the state he did want. Beilin, by contrast, promises to lift every Jewish burden, political as well as religious. He assures Israelis that all they need do to win peace is to give up a little land. He assures prospective converts that, in order to join a notoriously demanding religious culture, they need give up nothing at all.

Israelis once knew that, because they were rebuilding the Jewish homeland, they had every right to expect American Jews to help them defend the country against its ene-



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mies, to help pay for the absorption of their fellow Jews, and to join in strengthening a common culture. They knew that, of all the Jews of the past two millennia, they and their parents had made the best and boldest historical decision to break the cycle of Jewish political dependency and become sovereign—with the full set of responsibilities that that involved. Beilin, though, is one of a new breed of Israelis—one who resents the obligations his grandfather assumed on his behalf, and who wants for himself the same *freedom* from Jewish responsibility that he notices among his secularized cousins in America.

Politicians know that optimism is infectious, and Israelis may be especially responsive to those who promise them easy solutions for their problems. Far from revitalizing Jewry, however, Beilin's plans would hasten the demoralization of an entire people. A percentage of modern Jewry has always looked for the easiest way out of its historical situation. It is very sad that this percentage should now include a prominent member of the political leadership of Israel.

Apocalypse Then

The Long March:
How the Cultural Revolution of the 1960's Changed America
by Roger Kimball
Encounter. 326 pp. $23.95

Reviewed by
Damon Linker

No one is neutral about the 1960's. As the critic Joseph Epstein noted some years ago, the decade has become, for better or worse, "a political Rorschach test."

Damon Linker *has written for* National Review, Policy Review, *and the* Wall Street Journal.

"The most controversial book of the year"
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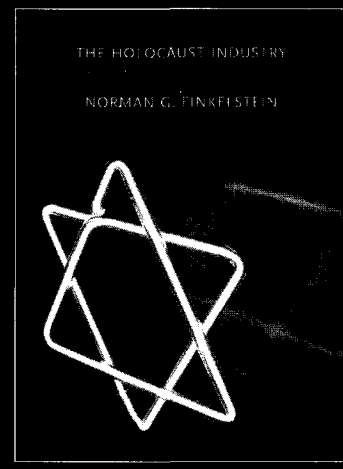

Now available in the US, *The Holocaust Industry* has prompted a storm of debate across Europe. Finkelstein contends that the main threat to the legacy of Nazism's victims comes not from the rubbish of Holocaust deniers, but from prominent, self-proclaimed guardians of Holocaust memory. His biting survey includes leading Jewish organizations, Holocaust scholars, and government officials. It raises disturbing questions about distortions of the historical record and the compensation of survivors.

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A liberal, for example, can be at least partially defined as someone who believes the 60's were a time of admirable idealism, even if the excesses of the New Left and the counterculture made the country a somewhat less safe and orderly place than it once was. Hard leftists, by contrast, see the era as a time of truly revolutionary potential, a time when young people made great strides toward overthrowing middle-class conformity and the "system" that perpetuates it—only to see their hopes fade with the election of Richard Nixon and the country's return to apathetic slumber.

And then there are those on the other side. If liberals see the 60's as a time of idealism, conservatives tend to focus on the failure of liberalism itself to resist the destructive and antidemocratic impulses let loose by 60's leftism. And if a hard leftist is one who thinks that regrettably the 1960's accomplished next to nothing, a hard conservative is one who believes the decade changed virtually everything for the worse, inaugurating a period of moral decline that continues to this day. According to this last view, every sordid detail of our fin de siècle—from cold-blooded murder in suburban schools to pornography on the Internet and in the Oval Office—can be traced to the influence of the New Left and the counterculture, the charlatans and demagogues who led these movements, and the spoiled and self-righteous upper-class children who carried out their mandate.

IN RECENT years Roger Kimball has distinguished himself as one of the most articulate and forceful spokesmen for the hard conservative view. In his first book, *Tenured Radicals* (1990), he argued persuasively that the left-wing extremists of the 1960's, having failed to capture the nation's political institutions, redirected their activism toward the universities, where they have pursued their agenda by indoctrinating the young. Now, in *The Long March*, Kimball has expanded his analysis from a single arena to the country as a whole, providing an account that is equal parts "cultural history" and "damage report." Based on a series of articles in the *New Criterion*, where he is the managing editor, the book focuses in particular on the "seductive personalities"—mostly artists and writers—who formed the vanguard of a cultural revolution that "tore apart, perhaps irrevocably, the moral and intellectual fabric of our society."

Kimball finds the antecedents of this cultural revolution in the actions and ideas of the Beat movement of the 1950's. In his view, the avant-garde writers Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and William S. Burroughs did much to prepare the way for "pathologies" that would arrive in full force only a decade later. Whether one considers "their squalid, promiscuous sex lives, their pseudospirituality, their attack on rationality," or "their aggressive narcissism and juvenile political posturing," Kimball writes in his characteristically heated prose, "the Beats were every bit as 'advanced' as any 60's radical."

Kimball turns next to the novelist Norman Mailer and the critic Susan Sontag, literary celebrities who were no less guilty of "softening up" the culture and preparing it for the revolution-to-come. Mailer's special contribution was to celebrate violence as a personal and social necessity. As he declared in a notorious 1957 essay, anyone seeking authenticity amid the spiritual desolation of postwar America had no choice but to encourage the "psychopath" in himself. Thus, a young thug who "beat in the brains of a candy-store keeper" was not committing a heinous crime, Mailer wrote, but rather answering an urgent and understandable need "to purge his violence" and find "an orgasm," figuratively speaking, "more apocalyptic than the one which preceded it."

Sontag, for her part, was an especially energetic source of the anti-Americanism and hatred of the West that were central to 60's radicalism. Before traveling to Hanoi at the height of the Vietnam war—as a guest of the North Vietnamese—she announced that the U.S. had become a "criminal, sinister country," possessed by the "monstrous conceit that it has the mandate to dispose of the destiny of the world." This assessment, Kimball writes, was itself an outgrowth of her conclusion, reached around the same time, that the "white race" was nothing less than "the cancer of human history."

By the late 1960's, such pronouncements had become commonplace, as had the utopian visions that were their inevitable counterpart. Of particular interest to Kimball are the various sex gurus who (like the Beats) largely predated the counterculture, from the orgasm-obsessed Wilhelm Reich, to Norman O. Brown with his advocacy of "erotic exuberance," to Herbert Marcuse and his improbable melding of Freud with Marx. As Kimball puts it, the ideas put forward by such people—Marcuse declared the need for a "progenital polymorphous sexuality" that would bring about "the redemption of pleasure, the halt of time, the absorption of death"—were "so extravagant that one is tempted to dismiss them as ridiculous figments of a diseased understanding. The problem is that these figments . . . have been extolled as liberating wisdom by an entire generation."

Kimball concludes by turning from literature and high culture to the agendas of activists like the Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver and the drug propagandist Timothy Leary. As he sees it, by the last years of the 1960's the ethic of "serial emancipation" had succeeded to such an extent that traditional forms of artistic representation and expression, even those of the counterculture's intellectual founders, appeared insufficiently revolutionary. All that remained was Leary's call to

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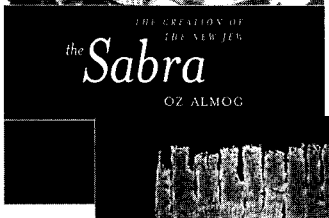
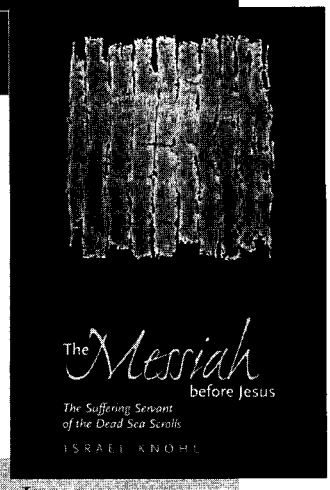
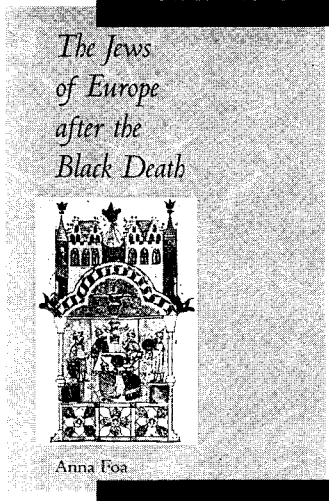
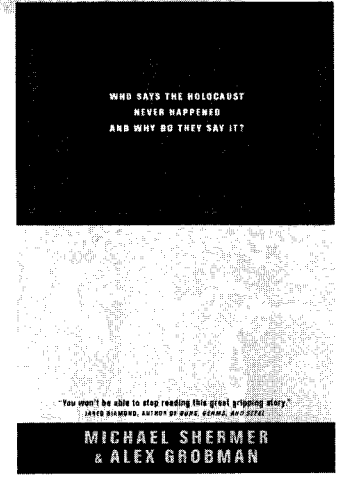
Jewish World Views








WHO SAYS THE HOLOCAUST NEVER HAPPENED AND WHY DO THEY SAY IT?
"You won't be able to stop reading this great gripping story."
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THE SABRA
The Creation of the New Jew
by Oz Almog
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"drop out" in a drug-induced stupor and Cleaver's incitement to armed insurrection, alternatives that shared little besides a reckless rejection of traditional standards of lawfulness and civility.

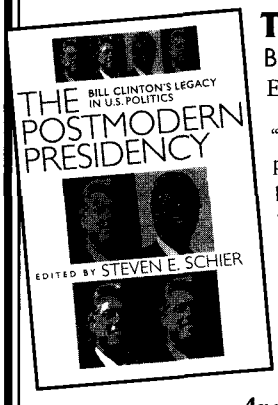
IN LAYING out this sorry tale in such vivid detail, Roger Kimball has indubitably performed a service. In the pages of his book we are once again reminded of the vulgarity and heedless destructiveness of so much that was said and done during the 1960's, in culture no less than in politics and manners. The leaders of the counterculture, Kimball writes, "pandered to a generation's vanity, ambition, cowardice, and lust for sensation; increasingly they pandered to a generation whose vanity *was* its lust for sensation."

And yet, for all its single-minded power as a polemic, *The Long March* falls short as a work of cultural history. At no point is there a pause in the indictment, a moment when Kimball steps back to gain some distance from his declared enemies, let alone any sympathetic understanding of them or of those who, whether permanently or momentarily, became attracted to them.

This limitation is most apparent in his decision not to undertake what he calls an "etiology" of the 60's. Declaring that there is a "never-ending series of incomplete answers to the question of 'Why?,'" he has chosen to tabulate the "effects" of the counterculture rather than to explain the reasons for its emergence or success. But without determining the source of the disease, it is difficult to be sure what its effects really have been, or to know how to cure them.

Kimball notes that during the 60's, "attitudes that had characterized a tiny minority on the fringes of the culture were more and more accepted into the mainstream." But *why* were they accepted, and not rejected? One possible reason for the embrace of ideas propounded by figures like Ginsberg, Mailer, and Marcuse is that they appealed to something in the nation's collective psyche—perhaps its passionate love of freedom and equality. But if that is so, or even partially so, then the 60's emerge—again, partially—as an outgrowth of very American preoccupations. Kimball, however, having neglected to ask whether the counterculture represented a deviation from American principles or was in some way a natural if deeply troubling result of them, is in no position to propose an appropriate remedy.

The result is a book that, for all its virtues, is permeated by an air of desperation and dejection. Indeed, Kimball closes his discussion with angry swipes at David Brooks and Mark Lilla, two conservative writers whose less impassioned examinations of the era have led them to positions very different from his



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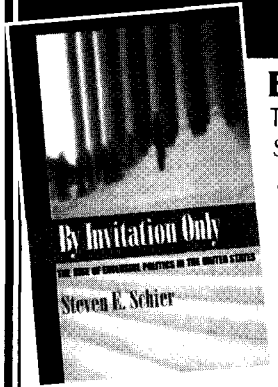

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Jerusalem (2)

Should the U.S. Embassy be moved to the capital of Israel?

In a previous clarifying message we showed that before the Six-Day War in 1967, the claim that Jerusalem was a Moslem/Arab city had seldom been asserted and that such claim had come about only in modern times. The status of Jerusalem has now again become of immediate interest, in connection with the ongoing peace process between Israel and the Palestinians and with the effort, supported by 93 senators, to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

What are the facts?

Jerusalem – reunited and indivisible. Ever since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, all American governments and all American Congresses have confirmed their conviction that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and that, once reunited, it should remain indivisible. Before the Six-Day War in 1967, the city was divided, the Jordanians having occupied the eastern part. During their 19-year reign, all Jewish residents were driven out, all Jewish places of worship closed or destroyed, and Jewish cemeteries desecrated. The various Christian denominations, with churches and sacred places in Jerusalem, operated under the strict control of Moslem authorities.

All this ended in 1967 with the liberation of all of Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Forces and with the reunification of the city. Access to the city and to all holy places became available to everybody. The many religious bodies in the holy city (and in all of Israel) are able to pursue their activities without any restrictions. Jerusalem today is truly a free and open city. Just as the whole world rejoiced when the ugly wall dividing Berlin was torn down, so do we rejoice that the wall, the barbed wire and the machine gun emplacements were finally torn down in Jerusalem.

U.S. Embassy not in Israel's capital. While the Palestinians lay claim to the eastern part of Jerusalem and wish it to become the capital of a hoped-for Palestinian state, nobody--not even the Arabs themselves--question the western part of the city to be Israeli. It is remarkable therefore that, despite this universal recognition, the United States has steadfastly insisted on placing and keeping its embassy in Tel Aviv, the major commercial city, instead of in Jerusalem--Israel's capital--the seat of the Knesset(parliament), the Supreme Court, and of all government offices. It is as if a government accredited to the United States were to insist on keeping its embassy in, say, New York, rather than in Washington, D.C.

With the U.S. in the lead, all other countries, with the sole exceptions of Costa Rica and El Salvador, have also located their embassies in Tel Aviv, rather than in Jerusalem. It is a bizarre situation; all ambassadors and their staffs--including the U.S. Ambassador and his staff--must make almost daily trips to Jerusalem, because no government business is conducted in Tel Aviv. The United States maintains diplomatic relations with over 150 countries. In all of them, the U.S. Embassy is located in that nation's designated capital. The only exception is Israel where, so far, our government has insisted on locating its embassy in a city other than the capital.

> **"The question of the status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israel conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state."**

Congress in favor of moving Embassy to Jerusalem. Despite the fact that, prior to their election, both President Clinton and Vice President Gore assured the public that the U.S. Embassy would be moved to Israel's capital, the Administration has until now blocked all moves in that direction, declaring that it would jeopardize the so-called "final status" talks on Jerusalem.

Leaders of Congress – both Republican and Democratic – have introduced legislation by which the U.S. Embassy would have to be moved to Jerusalem within the next three or four years. That legislation has been endorsed by 93 senators. The U.S. has a lease on a 10-acre embassy lot in Talpiot, a totally Jewish neighborhood in West Jerusalem. It is to be expected therefore that, before too long, reality will prevail and that the U.S. Embassy in Israel will indeed be located in Jerusalem – the capital of one of its closest allies.

The reason given for not moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem is that it might violate "Arab sensitivities". While there would be some posturing, none of the Arab states could afford to do much else. Egypt would not refuse its yearly multi-billion dollar subsidy from Washington. King Abdullah of Jordan would not jeopardize the lifeline that the U.S. has extended to him. Even though the PLO would perhaps once again request suspension of the peace talks, it would soon return to the negotiating table. The question of the status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israel conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state. The move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem will signal Yassir Arafat once and for all that he will not get U.S. and world support for the division of Jerusalem and for its establishment--in any part of it--as the capital of a new Arab state.

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own. According to Brooks, for example, the most potent bohemian ideals of the 60's have been not only absorbed but actually neutralized by American's abiding and still dominant attachment to bourgeois values. Lilla, for his part, shares Kimball's disgust with the counterculture but argues that just as the 1960's saw one revolution, the *1980's* saw another altogether—the Reagan revolution. To Lilla, it is the effects bequeathed by these two opposed yet complementary revolutions that make up the complicated moral and cultural universe we inhabit today.

These are controversial claims by dissenting friends, and they merit further debate. They certainly do not deserve the rude dismissal that Kimball gives them. But the careful consideration of views at odds with one's own is a virtue of the intellect, not the battlefield. In that respect, it is especially disheartening to see one of our liveliest and best-trained intellects falling prey to the ideological furies let loose by a decade he rightly deplores.

The Adventures of . . .

Bellow: A Biography
by James Atlas

Random House. 608 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
John Gross

In the afterword to his new biography of Saul Bellow, James Atlas asks how much we would know about Samuel Johnson today if it were not for James Boswell and other contemporaries who left their impressions of him. The short answer is, a great deal. We would still have Johnson's works.

If literary biography is not as important a genre as its practitioners understandably tend to assume, neither is it an unmixed blessing. All too often, the record of a writer's life can get in the way of his books, or rob them of some of their primary power. This is especially true in the case of novelists. A work of fiction presents us with a world; a biographer comes along and tells us what that world is "really" all about. Even the most sensitive biography of a novelist is bound to involve a measure of demythologizing, and to demythologize, as far as fiction is concerned, is to diminish.

Yet curiosity will always get the better of us. The demand for biographies, or at any rate the eagerness to read them once they are there, continues unabated. Bellow, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1976, has already attracted at least two biographers, to say nothing of memoir-writers and critics with a biographical bent. Now, at the hands of James Atlas, he receives the full treatment.

Atlas, a magazine writer and the author of a well-received life of the American poet Delmore Schwartz (1977), has acquitted himself well—much better than one might expect from his frequently callow literary journalism. The book is lively, intelligent, and as readable as it is thorough. Its judgments, more often than not, are persuasive. And while it will not please those for whom Bellow can do no wrong, most readers are likely to feel that it is written essentially out of admiration—or out of a struggle to preserve that admiration.

Certainly it leaves one in no doubt as to Bellow's great gifts, or the appropriateness of his being awarded the Nobel Prize (something that cannot be said of certain other recipients). There are useful emphases here, too: a leading place among Bellow's later books is rightly assigned to the novella, *The Bellarosa Connec-*

John Gross *is the author of* Shylock: A Legend and Its Legacy *and the editor of literary collections including* The New Oxford Book of English Prose *and* The Oxford Book of Comic Verse.

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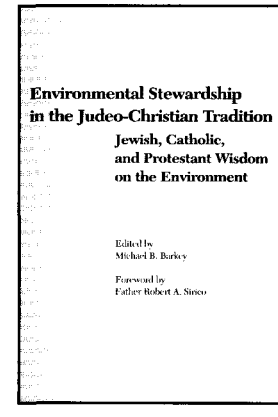

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tion (1989). Atlas analyzes as well as praises, finding an excellent formulation for a central conflict in Bellow's work, the clash between his "experience-hungry" side and his "self-protective" side. He writes illuminatingly on early drafts and evolving versions of the novels. And he tracks down literary debts that sometimes go further than Bellow himself is ready to acknowledge—to Theodore Dreiser, for example.

WHERE ATLAS is more muted is in discussing the intellectual content of the novels. Bellow's heroes, he observes, "share a penchant for belaboring ideas." Apart from putting this tendency down to the novelist's immersion in "the University of Chicago Great Books Culture" (Bellow was a student at Chicago in the early 30's, and decades later returned to the university to teach), he wonders whether it does not also represent an impulse on Bellow's part "to distance himself from his true and more painful material—a flight into abstraction."

These comments are not altogether unfair. The ideas in the novels can sometimes seem insufficiently integrated or even, when they are expressed by some of Bellow's rougher characters, downright incongruous. But they also have positive effects that make the price well worth paying. They aerate Bellow's work; they enlarge its horizons far beyond those of most novelists. And in the later books, especially, they are often anything but abstract: they shade into strongly held beliefs and attitudes.

To label those attitudes conservative, or even culturally conservative, would be to simplify, and to pin Bellow down in a way he himself would resist: he remains first and last an independent, the guardian of his own autonomy. Still, no one is likely to mistake him for a man of the Left. In *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970) he directed a classic blow at 60's radicalism. Since then, he has regularly made it clear how out of tune he is with great swathes of liberal and progressive opinion.

Atlas is unhappy with this side of his subject. Every so often, he sounds a note of disapproval, and when he reaches *Mr. Sammler's Planet* he goes so far as to speak of its author's having turned into a "full-blown reactionary." Still, the impressive thing is how neutral a tone he maintains most of the time. Anyone hoping to applaud this book—or to pick a fight with it—on the grounds of political correctness will be disappointed. Atlas's general policy is to let the facts speak for themselves, and when he does venture a political criticism, his comments come across, in context at least, as curiously restrained, at times almost weightless.

MOST READERS are, in any case, likely to come to Atlas's book with their own views about Bellow's politics, and indeed about his novels. It is the account of Bellow's private life that is bound to attract the most curiosity.

Atlas is excellent on the early years in Chicago, where Bellow's family moved when he was nine. (He was born in 1915 in Lachine, Quebec.) It no doubt helps that Atlas comes from a Chicago Jewish background himself, but even more to the point is the fact that he has caught some of Bellow's own fascination with the scenes, personalities, and local or family lore that the novelist has so often quarried. We are given a strong sense of the young Bellow's faith in his own star, well marked by the time he was at college, and a step-by-step account of the forging of his literary identity, including a shrewdly judged name-change when he was twenty-one. (Before that he had been Solomon Bellow, or Sol to his friends. Saul became Paul, and Sol became Saul.)

There is also a powerful subplot, furnished by the writer Isaac Rosenfeld, Bellow's friend and rival from their schooldays until Rosenfeld's early death in 1956; the book deepens every time Rosenfeld appears. And there are one or two incidental adventures worthy of the hero of Bellow's breakthrough novel, *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), including the memorable moment when Bellow and a friend, in the course of a visit to Mexico, found themselves staring down at Leon Trotsky in his open coffin. They had joined the crowd milling around outside the morgue and been waved in by the police in the mistaken belief that they were journalists.

Bellow's admirable early novels, *Dangling Man* (1944) and *The Victim* (1947), won critical acclaim, though not much in the way of material rewards: their combined sales amounted to fewer than 4,000 copies. Then came *The Adventures of Augie March*, "the big one." With success, and the ascent into Celebrityland, some of the magic of the life-story fades.

Atlas's diligence is, however, unimpaired. He plows on, offering

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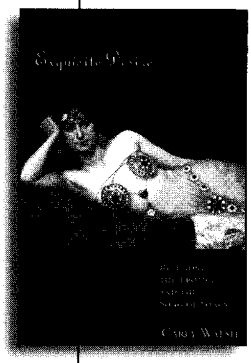

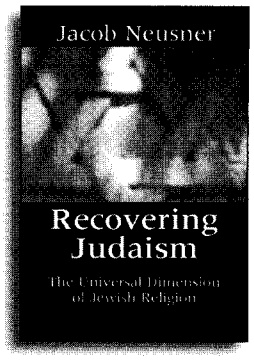

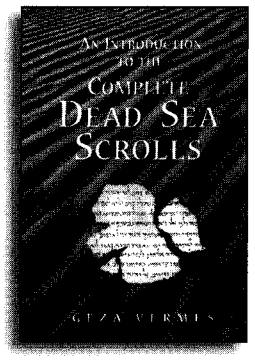

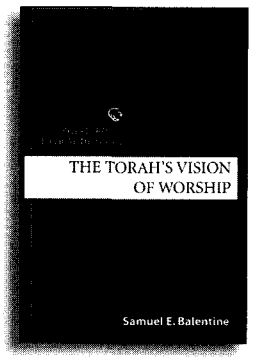

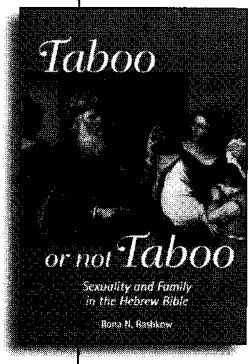

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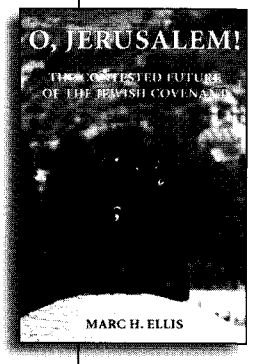

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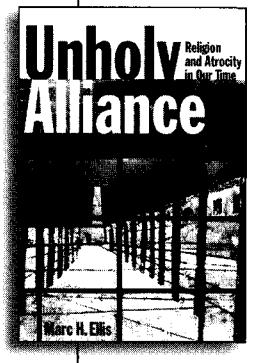

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highly detailed accounts of Bellow's marriages and divorces, his friendships and quarrels, his public appearances, his legal and financial affairs, his career as a teacher, his dealings with publishers and fellow writers. Though the material is well presented, there are times when it begins to pall, when we are tempted to cry, "Enough."

The fact that we do not, and that our interest soon revives, is a tribute primarily to the magnetism of Bellow's personality. His wit and resilience can energize even the least promising roles in which he appears: as he made Augie March say, plainly speaking on his behalf, "there is an *animal ridens* in me, the laughing creature, forever rising up." Nor does Atlas leave any doubt that Bellow is a master of inspired imagery and repartee. It is hard not to respect the man who once told an interviewer, when asked to sum up his day, "I write from about eight o'clock in the morning until one. Then I go out and make my mistakes."

Yet the charm is disarming only up to a point. The hard fact remains that much of the personal behavior chronicled by Atlas is unedifying, and the portrait that finally emerges is far from endearing. No doubt there are rights and wrongs on both sides, especially in Bellow's marriages; few would want to get dragged into them. But if only half the hostile testimony in the dossier is true, Bellow stands convicted of having been ruthlessly self-serving on many occasions, and mean-spirited on not a few.

Perhaps this is no cause for surprise. You do not have to read much literary history to recognize that being a Great Man's wife, or friend, or publisher, has always been a high-risk business. What may be harder to take is Bellow's vanity, which almost everyone who knows him seems to have had to learn to live with. Atlas quotes a droll but instructive comment by Bellow's erstwhile friend, the sociologist Edward Shils. (It has enough point to serve as Shils's posthumous revenge for the nasty treatment meted out to him in *Ravelstein*, Bellow's most recent novel, where he appears as the character Rakhmiel Kogon.) A few years after they had become estranged, Shils remarked to a friend, "Better watch out for Saul today; he's in a bad mood. The Nobel Prize is being announced, and you can't win it twice."

Well, there is nothing exactly new, either, about authors' egoism. Indeed, no writer could survive without having what in the north of England they call "a good conceit of himself." But at least with a major writer you hope for something magnificent, for fierce pride. The dismaying thing about Bellow's brand of self-regard, and its concomitant touchiness and readiness to lash out at others, is that they so often seem unworthy of him.

None of this makes Atlas's biography less interesting; rather the reverse. But it does leave one more grateful than ever for the distance that fiction imposes, even in the most obvious roman à clef. Atlas is an indispensable guide to the facts; but the best place to get to know Bellow, or the Bellow who is best worth knowing, remains his novels.

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We live in a world where some countries enjoy a material abundance beyond the wildest dreams of our forefathers. Such countries are rich because they are productive. The sources of that productivity—growing markets, technological improvement, and investment in human beings (human capital)—all play an important part in increasing productivity. The new growth economics literature has formalized some of these findings, but economic historians, development economists, and specialists in growth accounting have broadly understood them for some time.

By any standard of measurement much of the world's population is still poor, with individuals subsisting on less than two dollars a day. The disparity between the well-being of the average person in the developed world, where per capita annual income may exceed $20,000, and that in low-income countries such as Haiti or most of sub-Saharan Africa, where it may be under $500 a year, is striking, especially when one sees up close the living conditions associated with such poverty.

How do we account for the persistence of poverty in the midst of plenty? If we know the sources of plenty, why don't poor countries simply adopt policies that make for plenty? The answer is straightforward. We just don't know how to get there. **We must create incentives for people to invest in more efficient technology, increase their skills, and organize efficient markets.** Such incentives are embodied in institutions. Thus we must understand the nature of institutions and how they evolve.

Institutions are the framework that humans create to structure human interaction. They are made up of formal rules (constitutions, laws, and regulations) and informal constraints (conventions and norms of behavior) and the way both are enforced. Well-specified property rights that reward productive and creative activity, a legal system that enforces such laws at low cost, and internal codes of conduct that are complementary to such formal rules are the essential underpinning to productive economies. But well-specified property rights and an effective legal system are the creation of the political structure. Unfortunately, we do not know how to put such a political structure in place. Informal norms of behavior that make for honesty, integrity, and hard work are the product of long-term human interaction; we do not know how to create them in the short run. The result has been that **efforts to improve the performance of poor countries have been something less than a rousing success.** Sub-Saharan Africa remains a basket case, and our efforts to transform the diverse parts of the former Soviet Union into productive economies have so far been a dismal failure. But we are getting a better understanding of the process of political-economic change. The sources of informal constraints such as norms of behavior are a major modern priority in the social sciences and down the road will result in accelerating the reduction of poverty.

— Douglass C. North

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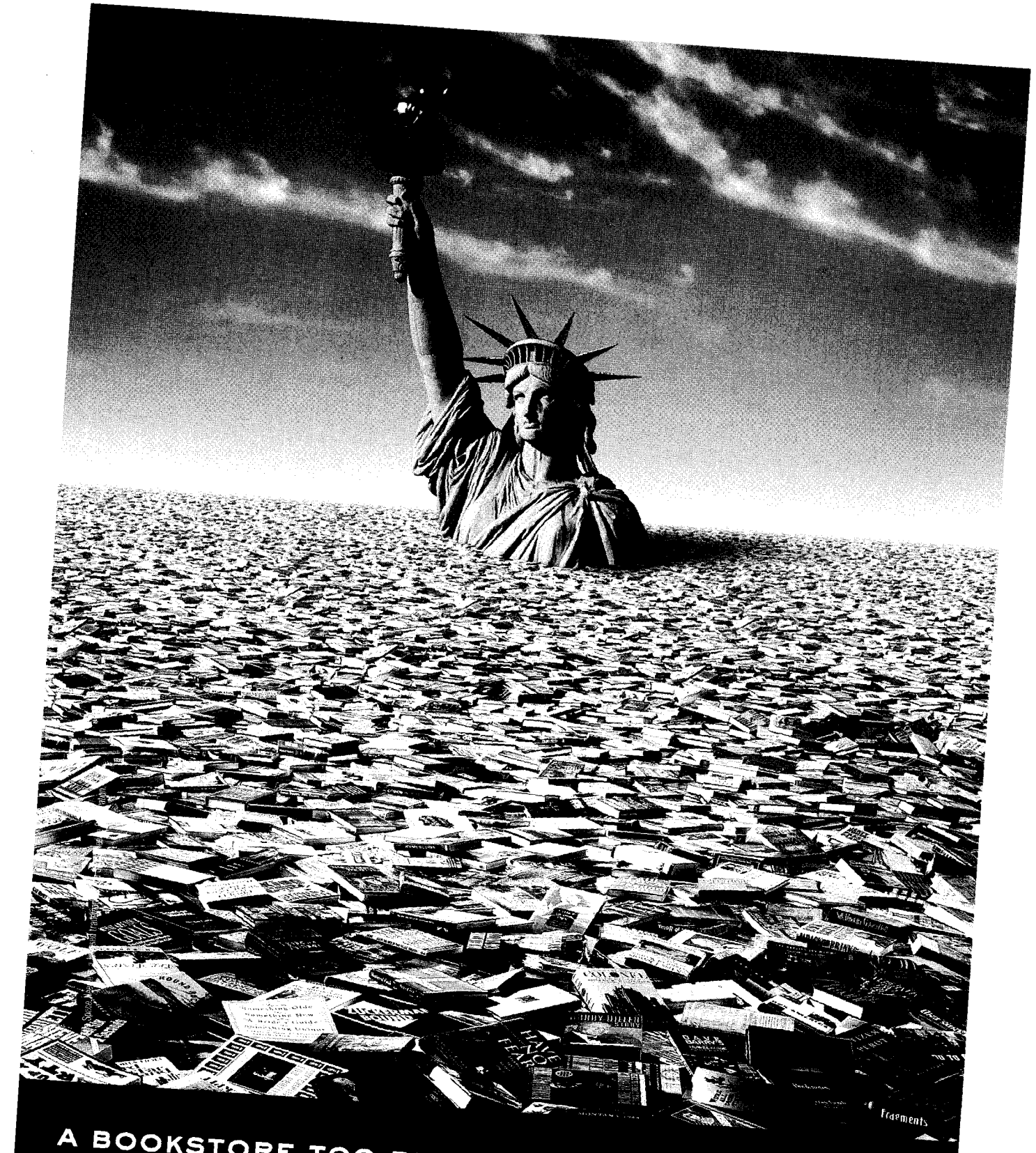

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